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Mather, Cotton, 1663-1728.
Essays to do good

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ESSAYS TO DO GOOD;

ADDRESSED

TO ALL CHRISTIANS,

WHETHER IN

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE CAPACITIES.

BY THE LATE

REV. COTTON MATHER, D. D. F. R. S.

TO DO GOOD, AND TO COMMUNICATE, FORGET NOT.—Heb. 13 : 16.

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
NO. 150 NASSAU-STREET, NEW-YORK.

D. Fanshaw, Printer.

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PREFACE.

THE following Essays were first published by Dr. Cotten Mather, at Boston, in 1710. They were received with much approbation by Christians in England and Scotland, as well as in our own country. The various methods which he then proposed of doing good, derived no small recommendation from the example of the excellent author, whose whole life was a practical comment on the subject.

From his earliest years he discovered a love to religion. He was accustomed to read fifteen chapters of the Bible daily, and his habits of private prayer were equally remarkable. At fourteen he kept days of private fasting and prayer. He consecrated *one tenth* of his little income to pious uses. At sixteen he was a member of the church.

Even at this early period of life, it was a maxim with him, "that the power and opportunity to do good, not only gives a right to the doing of it, but makes the doing of it a duty." He determined, accordingly, to act upon this principle; and he continued to do so through his whole life.

In all the various relations which he sustained to others around him, in the family circle, in social intercourse with friends, in all public and private duties, *the desire to do good* seemed to be the ruling passion of his life.

He was most scrupulously diligent in the improvement of time. He understood its value, and in order to redeem it from unprofitable waste by tedious visitors, he wrote over his study door, in large letters, "*Be short.*"

His biographer details, in a most interesting manner, the multiplicity of his *devices* and *efforts* in his favorite work of doing good. It seemed to be his principle, to let no day pass without contriving something useful, or without devoting some of his income to pious and benevolent purposes.

When his last sickness had come, which was in 1728, in the 65th year of his age, and he felt a strong persuasion that it would be unto death, the grand desire of his heart was, that "his own will might be entirely swallowed up in the will of

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When his last sickness had come, which was in 1728, in the 65th year of his age, and he felt a strong persuasion that it would be unto death, the grand desire of his heart was, that "his own will might be entirely swallowed up in the will of

God." At that time he had some things in hand, which he would gladly have lived to finish; "but," said he, "I desire to have no will of my own." When the physician intimated his apprehensions of the fatal issue of his disorder, he immediately said, lifting up his hands and eyes, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven!" and, a few hours before his departure, said, "Now I have nothing more to do here; my will is entirely swallowed up in the will of God." He frequently expressed the good hope he enjoyed, "that he was going to eat the bread and drink the water of life freely; that all tears would soon be wiped from his eyes; that it was impossible he should be lost; and that his views of the heavenly world were glorious."

Such a life, and such a death, will afford to the serious reader a powerful recommendation of the following pages. The proposals for doing good which they present, are not the idle speculations of an ingenious theorist, but the faithful transcript of a holy life.

A curious and interesting fact is related by Dr. Franklin, as to the influence exerted upon himself by this volume. When in France, in 1779, he addressed a letter to Dr. Mather, son of our author, in which he alludes to his father's work as follows:

"Permit me to mention one little instance, which, though it relates to myself, will not be quite uninteresting to you. When I was a boy, I met with a book entitled 'Essays to do Good,' which I think was written by your father. It had been so little regarded by its former possessor, that several leaves of it were torn out; but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking, as to have an influence on my conduct through life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good, than any other kind of reputation; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book."

In this edition, such portions of the original Essays are omitted, and such changes have been made in the phraseology, as might be expected after the lapse of more than a century since the work was written.

ESSAYS TO DO GOOD.

MUCH OCCASION FOR DOING GOOD.

GLORIOUS things are spoken in the Oracles of God, concerning those who devise good. And we may reasonably expect that *a Book of Good Devices* will meet with a grateful reception and an attentive perusal from all the friends of religion.

It is a sorrowful reflection, that if men would set themselves to devise good, a world of good might be done more than is now done in this "present evil world." There is much to be done, in order that the great God and his Christ may be more known and served in the world; and that the errors which prevent men from glorifying their Creator and Redeemer, may be done away.

Much is necessary to be done, that the evil manners of the world, by which men are drowned in perdition, may be reformed; and mankind be purified from that universal corruption of *heart* and of *life* which has overwhelmed them. And there is much which ought to be done to alleviate the miseries, in this world, of suffering and sorrow, and to extend relief and consolation to the wretched children of want and of wo. The world contains, it is supposed, about eight hundred millions of inhabitants. What an ample field for doing good!

In a word, the kingdom of God in the world calls

for innumerable services from us. To do such things is to do good. And those men devise good, who form plans to promote the happiness of their fellow-beings in this world, or who aim to supply their spiritual necessities, in order to secure their everlasting happiness in the world to come.

Thus the sphere of usefulness which we survey is boundless, and the means of doing good, which may be devised and adopted, are almost infinitely multiplied and various.

THE EXCELLENCE OF WELL-DOING.

It may be presumed that my readers will readily admit, that it is an excellent thing to be full of devices to bring about such noble designs. For any man to deride or despise my proposal, "That we resolve and study to do as much good in the world as we can," would be evidence of so unworthy a character, that I am almost unwilling to suppose its existence. Let no man pretend to the name of a Christian, who does not approve the proposal of a perpetual endeavor to do good in the world. What pretension can such a man have to be a follower of the Good One? The primitive Christians gladly accepted and improved the name, when the Pagans, by a mistake, styled them *Christians*, because it signified, *useful ones*. The Christians who have no ambition to be such, shall be condemned by the Pagans; among whom it was a title of the highest honor to be termed "a Benefactor:" to have done good, was accounted honorable. The philosopher being asked why every one desired to gaze on a fair object, answered, that it was the question of a blind man. If any man ask why it is so necessary

to do good; I must say, it sounds not like the question of a good man. The "spiritual taste" of every good man will give him an unspeakable relish for it. Yea, unworthy to be deemed a man, is he, who is not for doing good among his fellow-men. An enemy to the proposal, "that mankind may be the better for us," deserves to be reckoned little better than a common enemy of mankind. How cogently do I bespeak a good reception of what is now designed! I produce not only religion, but even humanity itself, as full of a "fiery indignation against the adversaries" of the design. I am sure that if I could have my choice, I would never eat, or drink, or walk with such a one, as long as I live; or look on him as any other than one by whom humanity itself is debased and blemished. A very wicked writer has yet found himself compelled, by the force of reason, to publish this confession: "To love the public, to study the universal good, and to promote the interest of the whole world, as far as it is in our power, is surely the highest goodness, and constitutes that temper which we call divine." And he proceeds: "Is doing good *for the sake of glory*, thus divine?" (alas, too much *human!*) "and is it not more divine to do good, even where it may be thought *inglorious*—even to the ungrateful, and to those who are wholly insensible of the good they receive?" A man must be far gone in wickedness who will open his mouth against such maxims and actions! A better pen has remarked it; yea, the man must be much a stranger to history, who has not made the remark: "To speak truth, and to do good, were, in the esteem even of the heathen world, most god-like qualities." God forbid that there should be any abatement of esteem for those qualities in the Christian world!

THE REWARD OF WELL-DOING.

I will not yet propose the REWARD of well-doing, and the glorious things which the mercy and truth of God will perform for those who devise good ; because I would have to do with such as esteem it a sufficient reward to itself. I will suppose my readers to be possessed of that ingenuous temper, which will induce them to account themselves well rewarded in the thing itself, if God will permit them to do good in the world. It is an invaluable honor to do good ; it is an incomparable pleasure. A man must look upon himself as dignified and gratified by God, when an opportunity to do good is put into his hands. He must embrace it with rapture, as enabling him to answer the great end of his being. He must manage it with rapturous delight, as a most suitable business, as a most precious privilege. He must "sing in those ways of the Lord," wherein he will certainly find himself while he is doing good. As the saint of old sweetly sang, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord ;" so ought we to be glad when any opportunity of doing good is presented to us. We should need no arguments to incline us to entertain the offer ; but should naturally run to it, as most agreeable to that "divine nature" of which we are made partakers. It should gratify us wonderfully ; as much as if an ingot of gold were presented to us. We should rejoice as having obtained the utmost of our wishes. Some servants of God have been so intent on this object, that they have cheerfully proposed to make any recompense that could be desired, to a friend who would supply the barrenness of their own thoughts, and suggest any special methods by which they might be useful. Cer-

tainly, to do good, is a thing that brings its own recompense. I will only say, that if any of my readers do not consider themselves enriched and favored of God when he employs them in doing good—with such persons I have done, and would beg them to lay the book aside: it will be irksome to carry on any further conversation with them. I will be content with one of Dr. Stoughton's introductions: "It is enough for me that I speak to *wise men*, whose reason shall be my rhetoric; to *Christians*, whose conscience shall be my eloquence."

Though the assertion may fly like chain-shot among us, and rake down all before it, I will again and again assert, that *every one of us might do more good than he does*: and therefore this is the first proposal I would make—to be *exceedingly humbled* that we have done so little good in the world. I am not uncharitable in saying, that I know not one assembly of Christians on earth, which ought not to be a Bochim, on this consideration. O tell me where I shall find it! Let us begin to be fruitful, by lamenting our past unfruitfulness. Verily, sins of omission must be confessed and lamented, or else we add to their number. The most useful men in the world have gone out of it, crying, "Lord, forgive our sins of omission!" Many a good man, who has been peculiarly conscientious about the profitable employment of his time, has had his death-bed rendered uneasy by this reflection, "The loss of time now lies heavy upon me!" Certain it is, that all unregenerate persons are unprofitable persons; and they are properly compared to "thorns and briers," to teach us what they are. An unrenewed sinner! alas, he never performed one good work in all his life! In all his *life*, did I say? I recal that word. He is "dead

while he liveth"—he is "dead in sin;" he has not yet begun to "live unto God;" and as he is himself dead, so are all his works; they are "dead works." O wretched, useless being! Wonder, wonder at the patience of Heaven, which yet forbears to cut down such "a cumberer of the ground!" O that such persons may immediately acknowledge the necessity of turning to God! O that they may cry to God for his sovereign grace to quicken them; and let them plead the sacrifice of Christ for their reconciliation to God; seriously resolve on a life of obedience to God, and resign themselves up to the Holy Spirit, that he may lead them in the paths of holiness! No good will be done, till this be done. The *first-born* of all devices to do good, is in being *born again*.

But as for you, who have been brought home to God, you have great cause not only to lament the dark days of your unregeneracy, in which you produced only "the unfruitful works of darkness," but also that you have done so little since God has quickened you and enabled you to do better. How little have you lived up to those strains of gratitude which might justly have been expected from you since God brought you into his "marvellous light!" The best of us may mourn in his complaints, and say, "O Lord, how little good have I done, compared with what I might have done!" Let the sense of this cause us to loathe and judge ourselves before the Lord; let it fill us with shame, and abase us wonderfully. Let us, like David, "water our couch with tears," when we consider how little good we have done. "O that our heads were waters," because they have been so dry of all thoughts to do good. "O that our eyes were a fountain of tears," because they have looked out so little for occasions to

do good. For the pardon of this evil-doing let us fly to the great sacrifice, and plead the blood of that "Lamb of God," whose universal *usefulness* is one of those admirable properties on account of which he is styled "a Lamb." The pardon of our *unfruitfulness* in doing good being thus obtained, we shall be rescued from condemnation to perpetual unfruitfulness. The dreadful sentence, "Let no fruit grow on thee for ever," will thus be prevented. A true evangelical commencement in the work of doing good, must *have* this repentance as the foundation of it. We do not "handle the matter wisely," if a foundation be not laid thus low, and in the deepest self-abasement.

How full of devices are we for our own secular advantage! and how expert in devising many little things to be done for ourselves! We apply our thoughts with mighty assiduity to the old question, "What shall we eat and drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" With strong application of mind we inquire, What shall we do for ourselves, in our voyages, in our bargains? We anxiously contrive to accomplish our plans, and avoid numerous inconveniences, to which, without some contrivance, we should be subjected. We carry on the business of our personal callings with numberless thoughts how to perform them well, and to effect our temporal affairs we "find out witty inventions." But, O rational, immortal, heaven-born soul, are thy wondrous faculties capable of no greater improvements, no better employments? Why should a soul of such high capacities, a soul that may be clothed in the "scarlet" of angels, yet "embrace a dunghill?" O let a blush, deeper than scarlet, be thy clothing, for being found so meanly occupied. Alas, in the multitude of thy thoughts within thee, hast thou no dispo-

sition to raise thy soul to some such thoughts as these : What may be done for God, for Christ, for my own soul, and for the most important interests of mankind ? How many hundreds of thoughts have we for ourselves, to one for God, his cause, and his people in the world ! How then can we pretend that we love him, or prove that a carnal, a criminal self-love, has not the dominion over us ? I again come to a soul of heavenly birth, and smite it, as the angel smote the sleeping prisoner, and cry, "Awake ! shake off thy chains. Lie no longer fettered in a base confinement ! Assert the liberty of thinking on the noblest question that can be asked, "*What good may I do in the world ?*" There was a time when it was lamented by no less a man than Gregory the Great, "I am sunk into the world !" Such may be the complaint of a soul that minds every thing else, and yet rarely recollects this noblest question. Ah ! "star fallen from heaven" and choked in dust, rise and soar up to something answerable to thy origin. Begin a course of thoughts which will be like a resurrection from the dead, and pursue the grand inquiry, "How may I become a blessing to the world ?" and "What may I do, that righteousness may dwell on the earth ?"

THE DILIGENCE OF WICKED MEN IN DOING EVIL.

How much mischief may be done by one wicked man ! Yea, sometimes one wicked man, of slender abilities, becoming an indefatigable tool of the devil, may effect incredible mischief in the world. We have seen some wretched instruments ply the intention of doing mischief at a strange rate, till they have ruined a whole country. It is a melancholy consideration, and I may say, an astonishing one—you will hardly

find one of a thousand who does half so much to serve God and his own soul, as you may see done by thousands to serve the world and the devil. A horrible thing!

“O my soul, thy Maker and thy Savior, so worthy of thy love; a Lord, whose infinite goodness will follow all thou dost for him with remunerations beyond all conception glorious; how little, how little is it that thou dost for him! At the same time look into thy neighborhood. See there, in the circle of your observation, some monster of wickedness, who, to his uttermost, will serve a master that will prove a destroyer to him, and whose wages will be death: he studies how to serve the devil; he is never weary of his drudgery; he racks his invention to go through with it. Ah! he shames me; he shames me wonderfully! O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face unto thee.”

We read of a man “who deviseth mischief upon his bed; who setteth himself in a way that is not good.” Now, why should not we be as active, as frequent, as forward in devising good? Why should not we be as wise to do good as he is to do evil? I am sure that we have a better cause, and better reasons for it. Reader, though perhaps thou art one who makest but a little figure in the world, “a brother of low degree,” yet, behold a vast encouragement! a little man may do a great deal of harm; and pray, why may not a little man do a great deal of good? It is possible that “the wisdom of a poor man” may start a proposal which may “save a city,” serve a nation! The strength of a single hair, applied to a wheel that has other wheels depending on it, may pull up an oak, or pull down a house.

It is very observable, that when our Lord Jesus Christ would recommend zeal for the kingdom of heaven, he did not propose for our imitation the example of honest wisdom ; no, but that of an unrighteous and scandalous dishonesty—that of the *unjust steward*. The wisdom of our Lord herein is much to be observed. His design is not only to represent the prudence, but the industry, the ingenuity, the resolution, the heroic efforts of the soul, necessary in those who would seek and serve the kingdom of God. We seldom, if ever, perceive among men that vivacity of spirit in lawful actions, which we observe in unlawful ones. The ways of honesty are plain, and require not so much pains in pursuing them ; but your thieves and cheats follow courses that are full of difficulties ; the turns and tricks which they require are innumerable : hence you find among such people the exercise of extraordinary subtilty—you find no such cunning and application any where else. How emphatical then is it, to borrow from these the colors of heavenly wisdom ! What I aim at is this, Let us try to do good with as much application of mind as wicked men employ in doing evil. When “wickedness proceeds from the wicked,” it is done “with both hands, and greedily.” Why then may not we proceed in our useful engagements “with both hands,” and “greedily” watching for opportunities ? We have no occasion for any sinister arts in effecting our designs ; God forbid that we should ever attempt the union of such inconsistencies. But why cannot we prosecute our designs with as much deep and copious thought as the men of evil arts ? And why may we not engage our minds with as transporting a vigor to do what is acceptable to God and profitable to men, as those wretches manifest when they “weary themselves to commit iniquity ?”

To reprove certain ecclesiastical drones, who had little inclination to do good, Father Latimer used a coarse expression to this effect : “ If you will not learn of good men, for shame, learn of the devil ; he is never idle.” Indeed, the indefatigable prosecution of their designs, who are styled “ the children of the devil,” may put us to the blush. Our obligations to do good are infinite : they do evil against all obligations. The reward which will be made to them who do good is encouraging beyond calculation : they who do evil will get nothing to boast of ; but “ evil pursueth sinners.” If the devil “ go about,” and the people inspired by him “ go about” seeking what harm they may do ; why may not we go about, and think, and seek where and how we may do good ? Verily, it were worthy of an angel so to do ! O thou child of God, and lover of all righteousness, how canst thou find in thy heart, at any time, to cease from doing all the good that can be done, in “ the right ways of the Lord ?” Methinks, that passage of God’s word may be a burden to us, and if we have a sense of honor in us, will be so : “ The children of this world are, in (and for) their generation, wiser than the children of light ;” yea, they pursue “ the works of darkness” more vigorously than any of us “ walk in that light” with which our great Savior hath favored us.

THE TRUE NATURE OF GOOD WORKS.

To the title of Good Works belong those essays to do good, which we are now urging. To produce them, the *first* thing, and indeed the *one* thing needful, is, a glorious work of grace on the soul, renewing and quickening it, purifying the sinner, and rendering him “ zealous of good works ”— a workmanship of God

upon us, "creating us anew, by Jesus Christ, for good works." And then, there is needful, what will necessarily follow such a work—a disposition to perform good works, on true, genuine, generous, and evangelical principles. These principles must be stated before we proceed.

In the first place, it must be taken for granted that the end for which we perform good works is *not* to provide the matter of our justification before God: indeed, no good works can be done till we are justified; before a man is united to Christ, who is our life, he is a dead man, and what good works can be expected from him? "Without me," saith our Lord, "ye can do nothing." The justification of a sinner by faith, *before good works*, and *in order to them*, is one of those doctrines which may say to the popish innovations, "With us are the gray-headed, and very aged men, much elder than thy father." It was an old maxim of the faithful, "Good works follow justification; they do not precede it." It is the righteousness of the good works done by our Savior and surety, not our own, that justifies us before God, and answers the demands of his holy law upon us. By faith we lay hold on those good works for our justifying righteousness, before we are able to perform our own. It is not our faith itself, either as producing good works, or being itself one of them, which entitles us to the justifying righteousness of our Savior: it is faith, renouncing our own righteousness, and relying on that of Christ provided for the chief of sinners, by which we are justified. All our attempts at good works will come to nothing, till a justifying faith in the Savior shall carry us forth unto them. This was the divinity of the ancients. Jerome has well expressed it, "Without Christ all virtue is but vice."

Nevertheless, first, you are to look upon it as a glorious truth of the Gospel, that the moral law (which prescribes good works) must, by every Christian alive, be the *rule* of his life. "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." The rule by which we are to glorify God is given us in that law of good works which we *enjoy* (I will so express it) in the ten commandments. It is impossible for us to be released from obligations to glorify God by a conformity to this rule: sooner shall we cease to be creatures. The conformity to this rule, in the righteousness which our Savior by his obedience to it has brought in to justify us, has for ever "magnified the law and made it honorable." Though our Savior has furnished us with a perfect and spotless righteousness, when his obedience to the law is placed to our account; yet it is sinful in us to fall short in our personal obedience to the law. We must always judge and loathe ourselves for the sin. We are not under the law as a *covenant of works*: our own exactness in performing good works is not now the condition of entering into life. Wo be to us if it were. But still, the *covenant of grace* holds us to it as our *duty*; and if we are in the covenant of grace, we shall make it our study to perform those good works which were once the condition of entering into life. "Every law of religion still remains." Such must be the esteem for the law of good works, for ever retained in justified persons; a law never to be abrogated or abolished.

And then, secondly, though we are justified by "precious faith in the righteousness of God our Savior," yet good works are required of us to justify our faith," to demonstrate that it is indeed "precious faith." A justifying faith is a jewel which may be counterfeited: but the marks of a faith which is not a counter-

feit, are to be found in those good works to which a servant of God is, by his faith, inclined and assisted. It is by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit that faith is wrought in the hearts of the chosen people: now the same grace which in regeneration disposes a person to fly by faith to the righteousness of Christ, will dispose him also to the good works of a Christian life; and the same faith which applies to the Savior for an interest in his righteousness, will also apply to him for strength to perform the good works which are "ordained that we should walk in them." If our faith be not of this kind, it is a lifeless faith, and will be without good fruits. A workless faith is a worthless faith.

Reader, suppose thyself standing before the judgment seat of Christ! a necessary, a prudent supposition: it ought to be a very frequent one. The Judge demands, "What hast thou to plead for a portion in the blessedness of the righteous?" The plea must be, "O my glorious Judge, thou hast been my sacrifice. O thou Judge of all the earth, permit dust and ashes to say, my righteousness is on the bench. Surely, in the Lord have I righteousness. O my Savior, I have received it, I have secured it on thy own gracious offer of it." The Judge proceeds: "But what hast thou to plead that thy faith should not be rejected as the faith of the hypocrite?" Here the plea must be, "O Lord, my faith was thy work. It was a faith which disposed me to all the good works of thy holy religion. It sanctified me. It brought me to thee, my Savior, for grace to perform the works of righteousness: it embraced thee for my Lord as well as Savior: it caused me, with sincerity, to love and keep thy commandments, and with assiduity to serve the interests of thy kingdom in the world."

Thus you have Paul and James reconciled. Thus you have good works provided for. The aphorism of the physicians is, "By a man's outward acts of vigor, you judge of his internal health." The actions of men are more certain indications of what is within, than all their sayings.

But there is yet another consideration upon which you must be zealously affected to good works. You must consider them as *a part of the great salvation* which is purchased for you by Jesus Christ. Without a holy heart you cannot be fit for a holy heaven, "meet for the inheritance of the saints in that light" which admits no works of darkness, where none but good works are done for eternal ages. But a holy heart will induce a man to do good with all his heart. The motto on the gates of the holy city is, "None but the lovers of good works to enter here:" this is implied in what we read, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" yea, to be saved without good works, were to be saved without salvation. Much of our salvation consists in doing good works. Heaven is begun upon earth when we are so engaged; and doubtless, no man will get to heaven who is not so persuaded.

I shall mention but one more of those principles from which good works proceed: it is that noble one, **GRATITUDE**. The believer cannot but inquire, "What shall I render to my Savior?"—the result of the inquiry will be, "with good works to glorify him." We read, that "faith worketh by love." Our faith will discover the matchless and marvellous love of God in saving us; and the faith of this love will work on our hearts, till it hath raised in us an unquenchable flame of love to him who hath so loved and saved us. These, these are to be our dispositions: "O my Savior! hast thou

done so much for me! now will I do all I can for thy kingdom and people in the world. O! what service is there that I may now perform for my Savior and his people in the world?"

These are the principles to be proceeded on; and it is worthy of special observation, that there are no men in the world who so much abound in good works, as those who, above all others, have abandoned every pretension to the merit of their works. No merit-mongers have exceeded some holy Christians, who have performed good works on the assurance of being already justified, and entitled to eternal life.

I observe that our apostle, throwing a just contempt on the endless genealogies, and long, intricate pedigrees which the Jews of his time dwelt so much upon, proposes in their stead, "Charity, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned:" as if he had said, "I will give you a genealogy worth ten thousand of theirs,"—first, from faith unfeigned proceeds a good conscience; from a good conscience a pure heart; and from a pure heart, charity to all around us. It is admirably stated!

OPPORTUNITIES TO DO GOOD.

Our opportunities to do good are our talents. An awful account must be rendered to the great God concerning the use of the talents with which he has intrusted us in these precious opportunities. Frequently we do not use our opportunities, because we do not consider them: they lie by unnoticed and unimproved. We read of a thing which we deride as often as we behold it. "There is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches." This is too frequently exem-

plified in our opportunities to do good, which are some of our most valuable riches. Many a man seems to reckon himself destitute of these talents, as if there were nothing for him to do; he pretends that he is not in a condition to do any good. "Alas! poor man, what can I do?" So he reasons with himself. My friend, think again; think frequently: inquire what your opportunities are: you will certainly find them to be more than you were aware of. "Plain men dwelling in tents," persons of a very ordinary rank in life, may, by their eminent piety, prove persons of extraordinary usefulness. A poor John Urich may make a Grotius the better for him. I have read of a pious weaver, of whom some eminent persons would say, "Christ walked, as it were, alive on the earth in that man." A mean mechanic—who can tell what an engine of good he may become, if humbly and wisely devoted to it?

This, then, is the next PROPOSAL. Without abridging yourselves of your occasional thoughts on the question, "What good may I do to day?" fix a time, now and then, for more deliberate thoughts upon it. Cannot you find time (say, once a week; and how suitably on the Lord's day,) to take this question into consideration:

What is there that I may do for the service of the glorious Lord, and for the welfare of those for whom I ought to be concerned?

Having implored the direction of God, "the Father of lights," consider the matter in the various aspects of it. Consider it, till you have *resolved* on something. Write down your resolutions. Examine what precept and what promise you can find in the word of God to countenance your resolutions. Review these memorials at proper seasons, and see how far you have pro-

ceeded in the execution of them. The advantages of these preserved and revised memorials, no rhetoric will be sufficient to commend, no arithmetic to calculate. There are some animals of which we say, "They know not their own strength;" Christians, why should you be like them?

METHODS OF DOING GOOD.

Let us now descend to PARTICULARS; but let it not be supposed that I pretend to an enumeration of *all the good devices* that may be conceived. Not a thousandth part of them can now be enumerated. The essay I am making is only to dig open the several springs of usefulness, which, having once begun to flow, will spread into streams, that no human foresight can comprehend. "Spring up, O well!" will every true Israelite sing, upon every proposal here exhibited; and "the nobles of Israel" can do nothing more agreeable to their own character, than to fall to work upon it. Perhaps every proposal that may be made, will be like a stone falling into a pool—one circle and service will produce another, till they extend—who can tell how far? Those who devote themselves to good devices, and who duly observe their opportunities to do good, usually find a wonderful increase of their opportunities. The gracious providence of God affords this recompense to his diligent servants, that he will multiply their opportunities of being serviceable; and when ingenious men have used themselves to a little contrivance in pursuing the best intentions, their ingenuity will sensibly improve, and there will be more expansion in their dif-

fusive applications. Among all the dispensations of a special Providence in the government of the world, none is less interrupted than the accomplishment of that word, "Unto him that hath shall be given." O useful man! take for thy motto, "To him that hath, shall be given;" and, in a lively use of the opportunities to do good, see how remarkably it will be accomplished; see what accomplishment of that word will at last surprise thee, "Though thy beginning be small, yet thy latter end shall greatly increase."

ON INTERNAL PIETY AND SELF-EXAMINATION.

Why should not the charity of which we are treating "begin at home?" It observes not a due decorum, if it doth not; and it will be liable to great exceptions in its pretensions and proceedings. "Call not that man wise whose wisdom begins not at home." This, then, is to be made an early PROPOSAL.

First, Let every man devise what good may be done for the correction of what is yet amiss IN HIS OWN HEART AND LIFE. It is a good remark of Fuller, "He need not complain of too little work, who hath a little world in himself to mend." It was of old complained, "No man repented him, saying, What have I done?" Every man upon earth may find in himself something that wants correcting; and the work of repentance is to inquire, not only "what we have done," but also "what we have to do." Frequent *self-examination* is the duty of all who would know themselves, or would not lose themselves. The great intention of self-examination is to find out the points wherein we are to "amend our ways." A Christian that would thrive in Christianity must be no stranger to a course of meditation.

This is one of the masters which are requisite to make a "man of God." One article and exercise in our meditation should be to find out the things wherein a greater conformity to the truths upon which we have been meditating, may be attempted. If we would be good men, we must often devise how we may grow in knowledge and in all goodness. Such an inquiry as this should often be made, "What shall I do, that what is yet lacking in the image of God upon me may be perfected? What shall I do that I may live more perfectly, more watchfully, more fruitfully before my glorious Lord?"

And why should not our meditation, when we retire to that profitable engagement, conclude with some resolution? Devise now, and resolve something to strengthen your walk with God.

With some devout hearers of the word it is a practice, when they have heard a sermon, to think, "What good thing have I now to ask of God with a peculiar importunity?" They are also accustomed to call upon their children, and make them answer this question, "Child, what blessing will you now ask of the glorious God?" After which, they charge them to go and do accordingly.

In pursuance of this piety, why may not this be one of the exercises which shall conspire to form a good evening for the best of days? Let it be a part of our work on the Lord's-day evening, seriously to ask ourselves the following question: "If I should die this week, what have I left undone which I should then wish I had been more diligent in performing?" My friend, place thyself in dying circumstances; apprehend and realize thy approaching dissolution. Suppose thy last, solemn hour arrived; thy breath failing,

thy throat rattling, thy hands with a cold sweat upon them: in this condition, "What wouldst thou wish to have done more than thou hast already done for thy own soul, for thy family, or for the people of God?" Think upon this question, and do not forget the result of thy thoughts; do not delay to perform what thou hast resolved upon. How much more agreeable and profitable would such an exercise be on the Lord's-day evening, than those vanities to which that evening is not unfrequently prostituted, and by which all the good of the past day is defeated! And if such an exercise were often performed, O how would it regulate our lives; how watchfully, how fruitfully would it cause us to live; what an incredible number of good works would it produce in the world!

Will you remember, Reader, that every Christian is a "temple of God?" It would be of great service to Christianity, if this notion of its true nature were more frequently and clearly cultivated. But certainly there yet remains very much for every one of us to do, that the temple may be carried on to perfection; that it may be repaired, finished, purified, and the topstone of it laid, with shoutings of "grace, grace!" unto it.

As a branch of this piety, I will recommend a serious and fruitful improvement of the various dispensations of Divine Providence which we have occasion to notice. More particularly: have you received any special blessings and mercies from the hand of God? You do not suitably express your thankfulness; you do not render again according to the benefit that is done unto you, unless you set yourself to consider, "What shall I render unto the Lord?" You should contrive some signal thing to be done on this occasion; some service to the kingdom of God, either within

yourself, or among others, which may be a just confession and memorial of what a gracious God has done for you. This is an action, to which the "goodness of God leadeth you." And I would ask, how can a good voyage, or a favorable contract be made without some special returns of gratitude to God? I would have a portion of your property made a thank-offering, by being set apart for pious uses.

Whole days of thanksgiving are to be kept, when the favors of God rise to a more observable height. Christians of the finer mold keep their private ones, as well as bear part in the public services. One exercise for such a day is, to take a list of the more remarkable succors and bounties with which our God has comforted us; and then to contrive some suitable acknowledgments of him, in endeavors to serve him; and this by way of gratitude for these undeserved comforts.

On the other hand, you meet with heavy and grievous afflictions. Truly, it is a pity to be at the trouble of suffering afflictions, and not get good by them. We get good by them, when they awaken us "to do good;" and I may say, never till then. When God is distributing sorrows to you, the sorrows still come upon some errands; therefore the best way for you to find that they do not come in his anger, is to consider what the errands may be. The advice is, that when any affliction comes upon you, you immediately reflect, "To what special act of repentance does this affliction call me? What miscarriage does this affliction find in me, to be repented of?" And then, while the sense of the affliction is yet upon you, seriously inquire, "To what improvement in holiness and usefulness does this affliction call me?" Be more solicitous to gain this point

than to escape from your affliction. O the peace that will compose, possess, and ravish your mind, when your afflictions shall be found yielding these "fruits of righteousness!"

Luther did well to call afflictions "the theology of Christians." This may be a proper place to introduce one direction more. We are traveling through a malicious, a calumnious, and abusive world. Why should not malice be a "good informer?" We may be unjustly defamed: it will be strange if we are not frequently so. A defamation is commonly resented as a provocation. My friend, make it only a provocation to good works. The thing to be now directed is this: Upon any reproach being offered, instead of being transported into a rage, as David was tempted to be against *Shimei*, retire and patiently inquire, "Has not God bidden such a reproach, to awaken me to some duty? To what special service of piety should I be awakened by the reproach which is cast upon me?" One thus expresses it: "The backbiter's tongue, like a mill-clack, will be still in motion, that he may grind thy good name to powder. Learn, therefore, to make such use of his clack as to make thy bread by it; I mean, so to live, that no credit shall be given to slander." Thus all the abuses you meet with may prove to you, in the hand of a faithful God, no other than the strokes which a statuary employs on his ill-shaped marble, only to form you into a more beautiful shape, and make you fitter to adorn the heavenly temple. Thus you are informed of a way to "shake off a viper" most advantageously. Yea, I am going to inform you how you may fetch sweetness out of a viper. Therefore, first, I propose that our former barrenness may now be looked upon as an obligation and incitement to

greater fruitfulness. But this motion is too general; I must be more particular. I would look back on my past life, and call to mind what singular acts of sin have blemished it, and been the reproach of my youth. Now, by way of thankfulness for that grace of God and that blood of his Christ, through which my crimes have been pardoned, I would set myself to think, "What virtues, what actions, and what achievements for the kingdom of God, will be the most contrary to my former blemishes? And what efforts of goodness will be the noblest and most palpable contradiction to the miscarriages with which I have been chargeable?" Yet more particularly, "What signal thing shall I do, to save others from dishonoring the great God by such miscarriages as those into which I myself once fell?" I will study such things—and perhaps the sincerity and consolation of repentance cannot be better studied than by such a conduct.

Give me leave to press this one more point of prudence upon you. There are not a few persons who have many hours of leisure in the way of their personal callings. When the weather takes them off from their business, or when their shops are not full of customers, they have little or nothing to do. Now, Reader, the *proposal* is, Redeem this time to your own advantage, to the best advantage. To the man of leisure, as well as to the minister, it is an advice of wisdom, "Give thyself unto reading." Good books of all sorts may employ your leisure, and enrich you with treasures more valuable than those procured in your usual avocations. Let the baneful thoughts of idleness be chased out of your mind. But then, also, let some thoughts on that subject, "What good may I do?" succeed them. When you have leisure to think on

that subject, you can have no excuse for neglecting so to do.

ON DOING GOOD TO OUR RELATIONS, CHILDREN, &c.

The *useful man* may now with much propriety extend and enlarge the sphere of his exertion. My next proposal therefore shall be, Let every man consider the RELATION in which God, the sovereign Ruler, has placed him; and let him devise what good he may do, that may render his *relatives* the better for him. One great way to prove ourselves really good, is to be relatively good. It is by this, more than by any thing else, that we “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.” It would be a piece of excellent wisdom in a man, to make the interests which he has in the good opinion and affection of any individuals, an advantage for doing good to them. He that has a friend, will show himself friendly indeed, if he think, “Such a one loves me, and will hearken to me; to what good shall I take advantage from hence to persuade him?”

This will take place more particularly where the endearing ties of natural affection give us an interest. Let us call over the several relations we sustain, and let us devise something that may be called heroical goodness, in discharging their duties. Why should we not, at least once or twice a week, make these *relative duties* the subject of our inquiries and of our purposes? Especially, let us begin with *domestic relations*, and “provide for those of our own house,” lest we deny some glorious rules and hopes of the Christian faith, by our negligence.

In the CONJUGAL RELATION, how agreeably may they, who are thus united, think on these words: “What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy

husband? or, how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"

The HUSBAND will do well to think, "What shall I do that my wife may have cause for ever to bless God for having brought her to me?" And, "What shall I do, that, in my deportment toward my wife, the kindness of the blessed Jesus toward his church may be exemplified?"

But then the WIFE also will do well to inquire, "Wherein may I be to my husband a wife of that character—'She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life?'"

With my married friends I will leave this excellent remark: "Family passions cloud faith, disturb duty, darken comfort." You will do the more good to one another, the more this sentence is considered. When the husband and the wife are always contriving to be blessings to each other, I will say with Tertullian, "Where shall I find words to describe the happiness of that state?" O happy marriage!

PARENTS! how much ought you to be devising for the good of your *children*! Often consider how to make them "wise children;" how to give them a desirable education, an education that may render them desirable; how to render them lovely and polite, and serviceable to their generation. Often consider how to enrich their minds with valuable knowledge; how to instil into their minds generous, gracious, and heavenly principles; how to restrain and rescue them from the "paths of the destroyer," and fortify them against their peculiar temptations. There is a world of good that you have to do for them. You are without the natural feelings of humanity, if you are not in a continual agony to do for them all the good that

lies in your power. It was no mistake of an ancient writer, in saying, "Nature teaches us to love our children as ourselves."

I will prosecute the subject, by transcribing a copy of PARENTAL RESOLUTIONS, which I have somewhere met with.*

1. At the birth of my children, I will resolve to do all I can that they may be the Lord's. I will now actually give them up by faith to God, entreating that each child may be a child of God the Father, a subject of God the Son, and a temple of God the Spirit; that it may be rescued from the condition of a child of wrath, and be possessed and employed by the Lord, as an everlasting instrument of his glory.

2. As soon as my children become capable of attending to my instructions, I will frequently say to each of them, Child, God has sent his Son to die, that you may be saved from sin and from hell. Now, you must not sin against him. To sin, is to do a very wicked thing. You must every day cry to God that he would be your Father, your Savior, your Leader. Child, you must renounce the service of Satan; you must not follow the vanities of this world; you must lead a life of serious religion.

3. Let me daily pray for my children with the greatest constancy and fervency; yea, let me daily mention each of them by name before the Lord. I would importunately beg for all suitable blessings to be bestowed upon them; that God would give them grace, and give them glory, and withhold no good thing from them; that God would smile on their edu-

* Probably composed by the author himself, though expressed in this modest manner.

cation, and give his good angels charge over them, and keep them from evil, that it may not grieve them; that when their father and mother shall forsake them, the Lord may take them up. Most earnestly would I plead that promise in their behalf, "Our heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." O happy children, if, by asking, I may obtain the Holy Spirit for them!

4. I would early entertain the children with delightful stories out of the Bible. In familiar conversation I would go through the Bible, when the "olive plants about my table" are capable of being so watered. But I would always conclude the history by some lessons of piety, to be inferred from them.

5. I would single out some scriptural sentences of the greatest importance; and some also that contain special antidotes to the common errors and vices of children. They will easily get these golden sayings by heart. Such sentences as the following:

Psalm 111 : 10.—The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Matthew, 16 : 26.—What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

1 Timothy, 1 : 15.—Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

Matthew, 6 : 6.—Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret.

Ecclesiastes, 12 : 14.—God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.

Ephesians, 4 : 25.—Put away lying, speak every one the truth.

Psalm 138 : 6.—The Lord hath respect unto the lowly, but the proud he knoweth afar off.

Romans, 12 : 17-19.—Recompense to no one evil for evil. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves.

Nehemiah, 13 : 18.—They bring wrath upon Israel, by profaning the Sabbath.

A Jewish treatise tells us, that among the Jews, when a child began to speak, the father was bound to teach him that verse, Deut. 33 : 4, "Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob." O let me betimes make my children acquainted with the law which our blessed Jesus has commanded us! It is the best inheritance I can give them.

6. I would cause my children to learn some evangelical catechism. In catechising them, I would break the answer into many small and appropriate questions; and by their answers to them, observe and quicken their understandings. I would connect with every truth some duty and practice, and expect them to confess it, consent to it, and resolve upon it. As we go on in our catechising, they shall, when they are able, turn to the proofs, read them, and inform me *what* they prove, and in what manner. Then I will watch an opportunity to put more nice and difficult questions to them, and improve the times of conversation with my family, for conference on religious subjects.

7. I would be anxious, till I may be able to say of my children, Behold, they pray! I would therefore teach them to pray. But, after they have learned a form of prayer, I will press them to proceed to points which are not in their form. I will show them the state of their own souls, and on every discovery will inquire of them what they think ought now to be their prayer. I will direct them every morning to take one or two texts out of the sacred Scriptures, and thence to form a desire, which they shall add to their usual

prayer. When they have heard a sermon, I will repeat to them the main subject of it, and ask them thereupon, what they have now to pray for. I will charge them, with all possible cogency, to pray in secret; and often say to each of them, Child, I hope you do not forget my charge to you about secret prayer; your crime is very great if you do.

8. I would betimes do what I can to produce a temper of benignity in my children, both toward one another and toward all. I will instruct them how ready they should be to communicate to others a part of what they have; and they shall not want for encouragement, when they discover a loving, courteous, and benevolent disposition. I will give them now and then a piece of money, that with their own little hands they may dispense something to the poor. Yea, if any one has hurt or vexed them, I will not only forbid all revenge, but will also oblige them to do a kindness, as soon as possible, to the vexatious person. All coarseness of language or behavior in them I will discountenance.

9. I would be solicitous to have my children expert, not only at reading with propriety, but also at writing a fair hand. I will then assign them such books to read, as I may judge most agreeable and profitable, obliging them to give me some account of what they read; but will keep a strict eye on what they read, lest they should stumble on the devil's library, and poison themselves with foolish romances, novels, plays, songs, or jests, "that are not convenient." I will direct them, also, to write out such things as may be of the greatest benefit to them; and they shall have their blank books neatly kept, on purpose to enter such passages as I recommend to them. I will particularly require

them now and then to compose a PRAYER, and bring it to me, that so I may discern what sense they have of their own everlasting interests.

10. I wish that my children may, at a very early period, feel the principles of *reason* and *honor* working in them; and that I may proceed in their education, chiefly on those principles. Therefore I will wholly avoid that fierce, harsh usage of the children, that would make them dislike and tremble to come into my presence. I would treat them so, that they shall fear to offend me, and yet heartily love to see me, and be glad of my returning home when I have been abroad. I would have it considered as a severe and awful punishment for a crime in the family, to be forbidden for a while to come into my presence. I would excite in them a high opinion of their father's love to them, and of his being better able to judge what is good for them, than they are for themselves. I would bring them to believe that it is best for them to be and to do as I would have them. Hence I would continually insist upon it, how charming a thing it is to *know* the things that are excellent, and how much better still to do the things that are virtuous. I wish them to propose to themselves, as a reward of good behavior: "I will now go to my father, and he will teach me something that I never knew before." I would have them afraid of doing any base thing, from a horror of the baseness there is in it. My first animadversion on a smaller fault, shall be an exclamation of surprise and wonder, vehemently expressed before them, that ever they should be guilty of doing so foolishly, with an earnest expectation that they will never do the like again. I will also endeavor to excite in them a weeping resolution to this effect. I will never use corporeal pun-

ishment, except it be for an atrocious crime, or for a smaller fault obstinately persisted in. I would ever proportion chastisements to faults; not punish severely for a very small instance of childishness, and only frown a little for some real wickedness. Nor shall my chastisements ever be dispensed in passion and fury; but I will first show them the command of God, by transgressing which, they have displeased me. The slavish, boisterous manner of education too commonly used, I consider as no small article in the wrath and curse of God upon a miserable world.

11. As soon as we can, we will advance to still higher principles. I will often tell the children what cause they have to love a glorious Christ who has died for them; how much he will be pleased with their well-doing; and what a noble thing it is to follow his example, which example I will describe to them. I will often tell them that the eye of God is upon them; that he knows all they do, and hears all they speak. I will frequently remind them that there will be a time, when they must appear before the holy Lord; and that they must *now* do nothing which may then be a source of grief and shame to them. I will set before them the delights of that heaven which is prepared for pious children; and the torments of that hell which is prepared for wicked ones. I will inform them of the kind offices which the good angels perform for children who fear God, and are afraid of sin; how the devils tempt them to do bad things; how they hearken to evil spirits, and are like them when they do such things; what mischiefs these evil spirits may obtain permission to do in the world, and how awful it would be to dwell among the devils, in the "place of dragons." I will cry to God, that he may make them feel the power of these principles.

12. When the children are of a proper age for it, I will sometimes have them with me alone, and converse with them about the state of their souls, their experiences, their proficiency, their temptations; obtain their declared consent to every article in the covenant of grace; and then pray with them, earnestly entreating that the Lord would bestow his grace upon them, and thus make them witnesses of the agony with which I am travailing to see the image of Christ formed in them. Certainly they will never forget such exercises as these!

13. I would be very watchful and cautious about the companions of my children. I would be very inquisitive to learn what company they keep. If they are in danger of being ensnared by vicious company, I will earnestly pull them out of it, as "brands out of the burning;" and will try to procure for them fit and useful associates.

14. As in catechising the children, so in the repetition of the public sermons, I would use this method: I would put every truth into the form of a question, to be answered in such a manner as to awaken their attention, as well as enlighten their understandings. And thus I shall have an opportunity to ask, Do you desire such and such a grace? with other similar questions. Yea, I may by this means have an opportunity to demand, and perhaps to obtain their early, frequent, and, I would hope, sincere consent to the glorious articles of the new covenant. The Spirit of grace may fall upon them in this action, and they may be sanctified by him, and possessed by him as his temples, through eternal ages.

15. When a day of humiliation arrives, I will make them know the meaning of the day; and after some

time given them to consider of it, I will require them to tell me what special afflictions they have met with, and what good they hope to get by those afflictions. On a day of thanksgiving, they shall also be made to know the intent of the day; and after consideration, they shall inform me what mercies of God to them they take special notice of, and what duties to God they confess and resolve to perform under such obligations. Indeed, for something of importance to be pursued in my conversation with them, I would not confine myself to such days, which may occur too seldom for it; but, particularly when the birth-days of any of the children arrive, I would take them aside, and remind them of the age which, having obtained help of God, they have attained; and tell them how thankful they should be for the mercies of God, upon which they have hitherto lived; and how fruitful they should be in all goodness, that so they may still enjoy their mercies. And I would inquire of them, whether they have ever yet begun to mind the work which God sent them into the world to perform; what attempts they have made toward it; and how they design to spend the rest of their time, if God continue them in the world.

16. When the children are in any trouble, whether by sickness or otherwise, I will take advantage of the occasion to set before them the evil of sin, the cause of all our trouble; and will represent to them, how fearful a thing it will be to be cast among the damned, who are in unceasing and endless trouble. I will set before them the benefit of an interest in Christ, by which their trouble will be sanctified to them, and they be prepared for death, and for fulness of joy in a happy eternity after death.

17. I wish, that among all the branches of a polite education, which I would endeavor to give my children, each of them, the daughters as well as the sons, may have so much acquaintance with some profitable avocation, (whether it be painting, or the law, or medicine, or any other employment to which their own inclination may lead them,) that they may be able to obtain for themselves a comfortable subsistence, if by the providence of God they should ever be brought into destitute circumstances. Why should not they be thus instructed as well as Paul, the tent-maker? Children of the highest rank may have occasion to bless their parents who made such a provision for them. The Jews have a saying on this subject, which is worthy to be mentioned: "Whoever teaches not his son some trade or business, does in reality teach him to be a thief."

18. As early as possible I would make my children acquainted with the chief end for which they are to live; that so their youth may not be altogether vanity. I would show them that their chief end must be to acknowledge the great God, and to bring others to acknowledge him; and that they are never acting wisely nor well but when they are so doing. I would show them what these acknowledgments are, and how they are to be made. I would make them able to answer the grand question, "For what purpose do you live; and what is the end of the actions that employ your lives?" I would teach them how their Creator and Redeemer is to be obeyed in every thing, and how every thing is to be done in obedience to him; I would instruct them in what manner even their diversions, their ornaments, and the tasks of their education, must all be managed, to fit them for the further service of

God, and how, in these also, his commandments must be the rule of all they do. I would therefore sometimes surprise them with an inquiry, "Child, what is this for? Give me a good account why you do it." How comfortably shall I see them "walking in the light," if I may bring them wisely to answer this question; and what "children of the light" they will be!

19. I would sometimes oblige the children to retire, and ponder on that question: "What should I wish I had done, if I were now dying?" After they shall have reported to me their own answer to the question, I will take occasion from it to inculcate upon them the lessons of godliness. I would also direct and oblige them, at a proper time, seriously to realize their own appearance before the awful judgment-seat of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to consider what they have to plead that they may not be sent away into everlasting punishment; what they have to plead, that they may be admitted into the holy city. I would instruct them what plea to prepare: first, show them how to get a part in the righteousness of him who is to be their Judge, by receiving it with a thankful faith, as the gift of infinite grace to the distressed and unworthy sinner: then show them how to prove that their faith is genuine, by their continual endeavor in all things to please him who is to be their Judge, and to serve his kingdom and interest in the world. And I would charge them to make this preparation.

20. If I live to see the children arrive at a marriageable age, I would, before I consult with heaven or earth for their best accommodation in the married state, aim at the espousal of their souls to their only Savior. I would, as plainly and as fully as I can, propose to them the terms on which the glorious Re-

deemer will espouse them to himself, in righteousness and judgment, favor and mercies for ever; and solicit their consent to his proposal and overtures: then I would proceed to do what may be expected from a tender parent for them, in their temporal circumstances.

From these parental resolutions, how reasonably, how naturally, may we pass on to say,

CHILDREN, the fifth commandment confirms all your other numberless and powerful obligations often to inquire, "Wherein may I be a blessing to my parents?" Ingenuousness of disposition would make this the very summit of your ambition, to be a credit and a comfort to your parents; to sweeten, and it may be, to lengthen the lives of those from whom, under God, you have received your own. And God, the rewarder, usually gives to such a conduct, even in this life, a most observable recompense. But it is possible you may be the happy instruments of more than a little good to the souls of your parents; yea, though they should be pious parents, you may, by some delicate methods, be the instruments of their growth in piety and preparation for the heavenly world. Happy, thrice happy children, who are thus favored! Among the Arabians, a father sometimes takes his name from an eminent son, as well as a son from his reputable father. Truly, a son may be such a blessing to his father, that the best surname for the glad father would be, "the father of such a one."

MASTERS, yea, and **MISTRESSES** too, must have their devices, how to do good to their servants; how to make them the servants of Christ, and the children of God. God, whom you must remember to be "your

Master in heaven," has brought them to you, and placed them under your care. Who can tell for what good he has brought them? What if they should be the elect of God, fetched from different parts, and brought into your families on purpose, that by means of their situation, they may be brought home to the Shepherd of souls! O that the souls of our servants were more regarded by us! that we might give a better demonstration that we despise not our own souls, by doing what we can for the souls of our servants! How can we pretend to Christianity, when we do no more to christianize our servants! Verily, you must give an account to God concerning them. If they should be lost through your negligence, what answer can you make to "God, the Judge of all?" Methinks, common principles of gratitude should incline you to study the happiness of those by whose labors your lives are so much accommodated. Certainly they would be the better servants to you, more faithful, honest, industrious, and submissive, for your bringing them into the service of your common Lord.

ON DOING GOOD TO OUR SERVANTS.

I have somewhere met with a paper under this title: **THE RESOLUTION OF A MASTER;** which may be properly inserted in this place.*

1. I would always remember that my servants are, in some sense, my children, and by taking care that they want nothing which may be good for them, I would make them as my children; and as far as the methods of instilling piety into the mind, which I use with my children, may be properly and prudently used

* The modesty of the author thus refers to what was probably his own production.

with my servants, they shall be partakers in them. Nor will I leave them ignorant of any thing wherein I may instruct them to be useful to their generation.

2. I will see that my servants be furnished with Bibles, and be able and careful to read the lively oracles. I will put Bibles and other good and proper books into their hands; will allow them time to read, and assure myself that they do not mispend this time. If I can discern any wicked books in their hands, I will take away from them those pestilential instruments of wickedness. They shall also write as well as read, if I may be able to bring them to it. And I will appoint them, now and then, such things to write, as may be for their greatest advantage.

3. I will have my servants present at the religious exercises of my family; and will drop, either in the exhortations, in the prayers, or in the daily sacrifices of the family, such passages as may have a tendency to quicken a sense of religion in them.

4. The article of catechising, as far as the age or state of the servants will permit it to be done with decency, shall extend to them also; and they shall be concerned in the conferences in which I may be engaged with my family, in the repetition of the public sermons. If any of them, when they come to me, shall not have learned the catechism, I will take care that they do it.

5. I will be very inquisitive and solicitous about the company chosen by my servants; and with all possible earnestness will rescue them from the snares of evil company, and forbid their being the "companions of fools."

6. Such of my servants as may be capable of the task, I will employ to teach lessons of piety to my

children, and will recompense them for so doing. But I would, with particular care, contrive them to be such lessons as may be for their own edification too.

7. I will sometimes call my servants alone; talk to them about the state of their souls; tell them how to close with their only Savior; charge them to do well, and "lay hold on eternal life;" and show them very particularly how they may render all they do for me a service to the glorious Lord; how they may do all from a principle of obedience to him, and become entitled to the "reward of the heavenly inheritance."

Age is nearly sufficient, with some masters, to obliterate every letter and action in the history of a meritorious life; and old services are generally buried under the ruins of an old carcass. It is a barbarous inhumanity in men toward their servants, to account their small failings as crimes, without allowing their past services to have been virtues. Gracious God, keep thy servant from such base ingratitude!"

But then, O SERVANTS, if you would obtain "the reward of the inheritance," each of you should set yourself to inquire, "How shall I approve myself such a servant that the Lord may bless the house of my master the more for my being in it?" Certainly, there are many ways in which servants may become blessings. Let your studies, with your continual prayers for the welfare of the families to which you belong, and the example of your sober carriage, render you such. If you will but remember four words, and attempt all that is comprised in them,

OBEDIENCE, HONESTY, INDUSTRY, AND PIETY,

you will be the *blessings* and the *Josephs* of the families in which you live. Let these four words be distinctly and frequently recollected, and cheerfully per-

form all your business on this consideration, that it is an obedience to heaven, and from thence will have a recompense. It was the observation even of a Pagan, "that a master may receive a benefit from a servant;" and, "What is done with the affection of a friend, ceases to be the act of a mere servant." The MAID SERVANTS of the house may render a great service to it, by instructing the infants, and instilling into their minds the lessons of goodness. Thus, by Bilhah and Zilpah, may children be born again; thus the mistresses, by the travail of their handmaids, may have children brought into the kingdom of God.

I proceed—Humanity teaches us to take notice of all our kindred. Nature bespeaks what we call a "natural affection" to all who are a-kin to us: to be destitute of it is a very bad character; it is a brand on the worst of men, on such as forfeit the name of man. But Christianity is intended to improve it. Our natural affection is to be improved into a religious intention. Reader, make a catalogue of all your more *distant relatives*. Consider them one by one; and make each of them the subject of your "good devices." Ask this question: "How may I pursue the good of such a relative; by what means may I render such a relative the better for me?" It is possible that you may do something for your relatives which may afford them cause to bless God for your relation to them. Have they no calamity under which you may give them relief? Is there no temptation against which you may give them some caution? Is there no article of their prosperity to which you may be subservient? At least, with your affectionate prayers, you may go over your catalogue; you may pray for each of them successively by name; and why may you not put proper books

of piety into their hands, to be durable memorials of their duties to God, and of your desires for their good?

ON DOING GOOD TO OUR NEIGHBORS.

This excellent zeal should be extended to the NEIGHBORHOOD. Neighbors! you stand related to each other; and you should contrive how others should have reason to rejoice that you hold this relation to them. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor;" but we shall scarcely allow him to be so, unless he be more excellent *as* a neighbor: he must excel in the duties of good neighborhood. Let that man be better than his neighbor, who labors most to be a better neighbor—to do most good to his neighbor.

And here, first, the poor people that lie wounded, must have oil and wine poured into their wounds. It was a charming trait in the character of a modern prince—"To be in distress is to deserve his favor." O good neighbor! put on that princely, that more than royal quality. See who in the neighborhood may thus deserve thy favor. We are told that "pure religion and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." The orphans and the widows, and all the children of affliction in the neighborhood, must be visited and relieved with all suitable kindness.

Neighbors! be concerned that the orphans and the widows may be well provided for. They meet with grievous difficulties, with unknown temptations. When their nearest relatives were living, they were, perhaps, but meanly provided for: what then must be their present solitary condition? That condition should be well considered; and the result of the consideration should be, "I delivered the orphan who had no helper, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

By the same rule, all the afflicted in the neighborhood are to be considered. Would it be too much for you, once in a week at least, to think, "What neighbor is reduced to pinching and painful poverty, or impoverished with heavy losses? What neighbor is languishing with sickness, especially with severe disease, and of long continuance? What neighbor is broken-hearted with the loss of a dear and desirable relative? What neighbor has a soul violently assaulted by the enemy of souls?" and then consider, "What can be done for such neighbors?"

In the first place, you will *pity* them. The evangelical precept is, "Have compassion one of another—be pityful." It was of old, and ever will be, a just expectation, "To him that is afflicted, pity should be shown;" and let our pity to the distressed be expressed by our prayer for them. It would be a very lovely practice for you, in the daily prayer of your closet, every evening to think, "What miserable object have I seen to-day, for whom I may do well now to entreat the mercies of the Lord?" But this is not all; it is possible, nay probable, that you may do well to visit them; and when you visit them, comfort them, carry them some good word, which may raise gladness in a heart stooping with heaviness.

And lastly: Render them all the assistance which their necessities may require. Assist them by your advice; assist them by obtaining the help of other persons on their behalf; and, if it be needful, bestow your ALMS upon them: "Deal thy bread to the hungry; bring to thy house the poor that are cast out; when thou seest the naked, cover him:" at least, exercise *Nazianzen's* charity: "If you have nothing else to bestow upon

the miserable, bestow a tear or two upon their miseries." This little is better than nothing.

Would it be amiss for you, always to have lying by you a list of the poor in your neighborhood, or of those whose calamities may call for the assistance of the neighborhood? Such a list would often furnish you with matter for useful conversation when you are conversing with your friends, whom you may hereby "provoke to love and to good works."

I will go on to say: Be glad of opportunities to do good in your neighborhood; yea, look out for them; lay hold on them with a rapturous assiduity. Be sorry for all the sad circumstances of your neighbor, which render your exertions necessary; yet, be glad, if any one tell you of them. Thank him who gives you the information, as having therein done you a very great kindness. Let him know that he could not, by any means, have obliged you more. Cheerfully embrace every opportunity of showing civility to your neighbors, whether by lending, by watching, or by any other method in your power. And let the pleasantness of your countenance prove that you do this willingly. Look upon your neighbors, not with a cloudy, but with a serene and shining face; and shed the rays of your kindness upon them with such affability that they may see they are welcome to all you can do for them. Yea, stay not until you are told of opportunities to do good; but inquire after them, and let the inquiry be solicitous and unwearied. The incomparable pleasure which attends the performance of acts of benevolence is worth a diligent inquiry.

There was a generous Pagan, who counted a day lost, in which he had not obliged some one. "Friends, I have lost a day!" O Christian, let us try whether

we cannot contrive to do something for one or other of our neighbors, every day that passes over our heads. Some do so, and with a better spirit than ever actuated the Pagan. Thrice, in the Scriptures, we find the good angels rejoicing; and it is always at the good of others. To rejoice in the good of others, and especially in doing good to them, is angelic goodness.

In promoting the good of the neighborhood, I wish, above all, that you will consult their spiritual good. Be concerned lest "the deceitfulness of sin" should destroy any of your neighbors. If there be any idle people among them, take pains to cure them of their idleness: do not nourish and harden them in it, but find employment for them; set them at work, and keep them at work; and then be as bountiful to them as you please.

If any poor children in the neighborhood are totally destitute of education, do not suffer them to remain in that state. Let care be taken that they may be taught to read, to learn their catechism, and the truths and ways of their only Savior.

Once more. If any persons in the neighborhood are taking to bad courses, affectionately and faithfully admonish them: if any act as enemies to their own welfare, or that of their families, prudently dispense your admonitions to them: if there be any prayerless families, cease not to entreat and exhort them, till you have persuaded them to commence domestic worship. If there be any service of God, or his people, to which any one is backward, tenderly excite him to it. Whatever snare you perceive a neighbor exposed to, be so kind as to warn him against it. By furnishing your neighbors with good books or tracts, and obtaining their promise to read them, who can tell how much

good may be done! It is possible, that in this way you may administer, with ingenuity and efficacy, such reproofs as your neighbors may need, and without hindering your personal conversation with them on the same subjects, if they need your particular advice.

Finally, if there be any bad houses which threaten to debauch and poison your neighbors, let your charity induce you to exert yourself as much as possible for their suppression.

That my proposal "to do good in the neighborhood, and as a neighbor," may be more fully formed and followed, I will conclude by reminding you that much *self-denial* will be requisite in the execution of it. You must be armed against all selfish intentions in these generous attempts. You must not employ your good actions as persons use water which they pour into a pump—to draw up something for yourselves. Our Lord's direction is, "Lend, hoping for nothing again," and do good to such as you are never likely to be the better for.

But then, there is something still higher to be required: that is, "Do good to those neighbors who have done you harm:" so saith our Savior, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." Yea, if an injury have been done you by any one, consider it as a provocation to confer a benefit on him. This is noble! It will afford much consolation. Some other method might make you *even* with your froward neighbors; but this will place you *above* them all. It were nobly done, if in your evening retirement you offer a petition to God for the pardon and prosperity of any person who has injured you in the course of the day: and it would be excel-

lent if, in looking over the catalogue of such as have injured you, you should also be able to say, (the only intention that can justify your keeping such a catalogue,) There is not one of these, to whom I have not done, or attempted to do a kindness. The Jews themselves offered this daily petition to God, "Forgive all who trouble and harass us." Christians exceed them: Justin Martyr tells us they did so in primitive times—"they prayed for their enemies."

But I must not stop here; something higher still is requisite. Do good to those neighbors who will speak evil of you for doing so: "Thus," saith our Savior, "ye shall be the children of the Highest, who is kind to the unthankful and to the evil." You will constantly meet with *monsters of ingratitude*; and if you distinguish a person by doing far more for him than for others, that very person perhaps will do you an injury. O the wisdom of Divine Providence, by which this is permitted, that you may learn to do good on a divine principle—good, merely for the sake of good! "O Lord, increase our faith!"

There is a memorable passage in the Jewish records. A certain gentleman was remarkably generous, and many persons were constantly relieved by his bounty. One day he asked the following question: "Well, what do our people say to-day?" The answer was, "Sir, the people partook of your favors, and blessed you very fervently." "Did they so?" said he, "then I shall have no great reward for this day." At another time he asked the same question—"Well, and what say our people now?" They replied, "Alas! good sir, the people enjoyed your favors to-day, and after all they did nothing but rail at you." "Indeed!" said he, "then for this day I am sure that God will give me a

good and a great reward." Thus then, though vile constructions and harsh invectives should be the present reward for your best offices for the neighborhood; yet be not discouraged: "Thy work shall be rewarded," saith the Lord. If your opportunities to do good extend no further, yet I will offer you a consolation, which a certain writer has thus elegantly expressed: "He who praises God only on a ten-stringed instrument; whose authority extends no further than his own family, nor his example beyond his own neighborhood, may have as thankful a heart here, and as high a place in the celestial choir hereafter, as the greatest monarch, who praises God upon an instrument of ten thousand strings, and upon the loud sounding organ, having as many millions of pipes as there are subjects in his empire."

PRIVATE MEETINGS FOR RELIGION.

We cannot dismiss this part of the subject without offering a PROPOSAL to animate and regulate PRIVATE MEETINGS of religious persons, for the exercises of religion. It is very certain that when such private meetings have been maintained, and well conducted, the Christians who have composed them have, like so many "coals of the altar," kept one another alive, and been the means of maintaining a lively Christianity in the neighborhood. Such societies have been strong and approved instruments to uphold the power of godliness. The disuse of such societies has been accompanied with a visible decay of religion: in proportion as they have been discontinued or disregarded in any place, the less has godliness flourished.

The rules observed by some ASSOCIATED FAMILIES may be offered with advantage, on this occasion. They

will show us what good may be done in a neighborhood, by the establishment of such societies.

1. It is proposed that a select number of families, perhaps about twelve, agree to meet (the men and their wives) at each other's houses alternately, once in a fortnight, or a month, or otherwise, as shall be thought most proper, and spend a suitable time together in religious exercises.

2. The exercises of religion proper for such a meeting are; for the brethren in rotation to commence and conclude with prayer; psalms to be sung; and sermons to be read.

3. It were desirable for the ministers, now and then, to be present at the meeting, and pray with them, instruct and exhort them, as they may see occasion.

4. Candidates for the ministry may do well to perform their first offices here, and thereby prepare themselves for further services.

5. One special design of the meeting should be, with united prayers to ask the blessing of Heaven on the family where they are assembled, as well as on the rest: that with the wondrous force of united prayers "two or three may agree, on earth, to ask such things" as are to be done for the families, by "our Father which is in heaven."

6. The members of such a society should consider themselves as bound up in one "bundle of love;" and count themselves obliged, by very close and strong bonds, to be serviceable to one another. If any one in the society should fall into affliction, all the rest should presently study to relieve and support the afflicted person in every possible way. If any one should fall into temptation, the rest should watch over him, and with the "spirit of meekness," with "meekness of wisdom,"

endeavor to recover him. It should be like a law of the Medes and Persians to the whole society,—that they will, upon all just occasions, affectionately give and receive mutual admonitions of any thing that they may see amiss in each other.

7. It is not easy to calculate the good offices which such a society may do to many other persons, besides its own members. The prayers of such well-disposed societies may fetch down marvellous favors from heaven on their pastors; their lives may be prolonged, their gifts augmented, their graces brightened, and their labors prospered, in answer to the supplications of such associated families. The interests of religion may be also greatly promoted in the whole flock, by their fervent supplications; and the Spirit of grace mightily poured out upon the rising generation; yea, the country at large may be the better for them.

8. The society may, on peculiar occasions, set apart whole days for fasting and prayer. The success of such days has been sometimes very remarkable, and the savor which they have left on the minds of those who have engaged in them, has been such, as greatly to prepare them to “show forth the death of the Lord,” at his holy table; yea, to meet their own death, when God has been pleased to appoint it.

9. It is very certain that the devotions and conferences carried on in such a society, will not only have a wonderful tendency to produce the “comfort of love” in the hearts of good men toward one another; but that their ability to serve many valuable interests will also thereby be much increased.

10. Unexpected opportunities to do good will arise to such a society; and especially if such a plan as the following were adopted: That the men who compose

the society, would now and then spend half an hour by themselves, in considering that question, *What good is there to be done?* More particularly,

Who are to be called upon to do their duty, in coming to special ordinances ?

Who are in any particular adversity ; and what may be done to comfort them ?

What contention or variance is there among any of our neighbors ; and what may be done for healing it ?

What open transgressions do any live in, and who shall be desired to carry faithful admonitions to them ?

Finally : What is there to be done for the advantage and advancement of our holy religion ?

In the primitive times of Christianity much use was made of a saying, which was ascribed to Matthias the apostle : " If the neighbor of an elect or godly man sin, the godly man himself has also sinned." The intention of that saying was, to point out the obligation of neighbors watchfully to admonish one another. O how much may Christians, associated in religious societies, effect by watchful and faithful admonitions, to prevent their being " partakers in other men's sins !" The man who shall produce and promote such societies, will do an incalculable service to the neighborhood.

I proceed to mention another sort of society, namely, that of **YOUNG MEN ASSOCIATED.**

Societies of this description, duly managed, and countenanced by the pastor, have been incomparable nurseries to the churches. Young men are hereby preserved from very many temptations, rescued from the " paths of the destroyer," confirmed in the " right ways of the Lord," and much prepared for such religious exercises as will be expected from them, when they shall themselves become heads of families.

I will here lay before the reader some ORDERS which have been observed in some societies of this nature.

1. Let there be two hours at a time set apart for the purpose; in which, let two prayers be offered by the members in rotation; and between the prayers let there be singing, and the reading of a sermon.

2. Let all the members of the society resolve to be charitably watchful over one another; never to divulge each other's infirmities; always to give information of every thing which may appear to call for admonition, and to take it kindly whenever it is given.

3. Let all who are to be admitted as members of the society, be accompanied by two or three of the rest, to the minister of the place, that they may receive his counsel and directions, and that every thing may be done with his approbation; after which, let their names be added to the roll.

4. If any person thus enrolled among them fall into a scandalous iniquity, let the rebukes of the society be dispensed to him; and let them forbid him to come among them any more until he give suitable evidence of repentance.

5. Let the list be once a quarter called over; and then, if it appear that any of the society have much absented themselves, let some of the members be sent to inquire the reason of their absence; and if no reason be given, but such as intimates an apostasy from good beginnings, and if they remain obstinate, let them be dismissed, with kind and faithful admonitions.

6. Once in three months let there be a collection, if necessary; out of which the unavoidable expenses of the society shall be defrayed, and the rest be employed for such pious purposes as may be agreed on.

7. Once in two months let the whole time be de-

voted to supplications for the conversion and salvation of the rising generation, and particularly for the success of the Gospel in that congregation to which the society belongs.

8. Let the whole society be exceedingly careful that their conversation, while they are together, after the other services of religion are over, have nothing in it that may have any taint of backbiting or vanity, or of things which do not concern them, and are not likely to promote their advantage. But let their conversation be wholly on matters of religion, and those, also, not disputable and controversial subjects, but points of practical piety. For this purpose questions may be proposed, on which every one, in order, may deliver his sentiments; or, they may go through a catechism; and every one, in rotation, may hear all the rest recite the answers; or they may be directed, by their pastor, to spend their time profitably in some other manner.

9. Let every person in the society consider it as a special task incumbent on him, to look out for some other hopeful young man, and to use all proper means to engage him in the resolutions of godliness, until he also shall be united to the society. And when a society shall in this manner be increased to a fit number, let it use its influence to form other similar societies, who may hold a useful correspondence with each other.

The man who shall be the instrument of establishing such a society in a place, cannot comprehend what a long and rich train of good consequences may result from his labors. And they who shall in such a society carry on the duties of religion, and sing the praises of a glorious Christ, will have in themselves a blessed earnest that they shall be associated together in the

heavenly city, and in the blessedness that shall never have an end.

PROPOSALS TO MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

Hitherto my discourse has been a more general address to persons of all conditions and capacities. I have proposed a few devices, but those which are as applicable to private persons as to others. We will now proceed to address those who are in a more public situation; and because no men in the world are under such obligations to do good as the MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL, "it is necessary that the word of God should be first spoken unto them." I trust, therefore, my fathers and brethren in the ministry will "suffer the word of exhortation."

It must be admitted, that they who are "men of God" should be *always at work for God*. Certainly, they who are dedicated to the special service of the Lord should never be satisfied but when they are in the most sensible manner serving him. Certainly, they whom the great King has brought nearer to himself than other men, should be more unwearied than others in endeavoring to advance his kingdom. They whom the word of God calls angels, ought certainly to be of an angelical disposition; always disposed to do good, like the good angels—ministers ever on the wing to "do his pleasure." It is no improper proposal, that they would seriously set themselves to think, "What are the points wherein I should be wise and do good, like an angel of God? Or, if an angel were in the flesh, as I am, and in such a post as mine, what methods may I justly imagine that he would use to glorify God?" What wonderful offices of kindness would the good angels cheerfully perform for such their "fellow-servants?"

We must call upon our people "to be ready to every good work." We must go before them in it, and by our own readiness at every good work, show them the manner of performing it. "Timothy," said the apostle, "Be thou an example of the believers." It is a true maxim, and you cannot think of it too frequently: "The life of a minister is the life of his ministry." There is also another maxim of the same kind: "The sins of teachers are the teachers of sins."

Allow me, sirs, to say, that your opportunities to do good are singular. Your want of worldly riches, and generally of any means of obtaining them, is compensated by those opportunities to do good with which you are *enriched*. The true spirit of a minister will cause you to consider yourselves *enriched* when those precious things are conferred upon you, and to prize them above lands, or money, or any temporal possessions whatever. "Let me abound in good works, and I care not who abounds in riches." Well said, brave Melancthon!

It is to be hoped that the main principle which actuated you, when you first entered upon the evangelical ministry, was a desire to do good in the world. If that principle was then too feeble in its operation, it is time that it should now act more vigorously, and that a zeal for doing good should now "eat up" your time, your thoughts, your all.

That you may be good men, and be mightily inspired and assisted from heaven to do good, it is needful that you should be *men of prayer*. This, my first request, I suppose to be fully admitted. In pursuance of this intention, it appears very necessary that you should occasionally set apart whole days for secret prayer and fasting, and thus perfume your studies

with extraordinary devotions: such exercises may be also properly accompanied with the giving of alms, to go up as a memorial before the Lord. By these means you may obtain, together with the pardon of your unfruitfulness, (for which, alas! we have such frequent occasion to apply to the great Sacrifice,) a wonderful improvement in piety and sanctity; the vast importance of which, to form a useful minister, none can describe! "Sanctify them through thy truth," said our Savior. They should be *sanctified*, who would become instruments for the propagation of the truth. You may obtain, by prayer, such an influence from heaven upon your minds, and such an indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as will render you grave, discreet, humble, generous, and worthy to be "greatly beloved." You may obtain those influences from above, that will dispel the enchantments, and conquer the temptations which might otherwise do much mischief in your neighborhood. You may obtain direction and assistance for the many services requisite to be performed in the discharge of your ministry. Finally, you may fetch down unknown blessings on your flocks, and on the people at large, for whom you are to be the Lord's remembrancers.

Your public prayers, if suitably composed, will be excellent engines to "do good." The more judicious, the more affectionate, the more argumentative you are in them, the more you will teach your people to pray. And I would ask, how can you prosecute any intention of piety among your people more effectually, than by letting them see you praying, weeping, striving, and in an importunate agony before the Lord, in order to obtain the blessing for them? The more appropriately you represent the various cases of your people

in your public prayers, the more devoutly sensible you will make them of their wants, and by this means they will obtain much consolation.

Your sermons, if they be well studied, as they ought to be, from the consideration of their being offerings to God, as well as to his people, will "do good" beyond all expression. The manner of your studying them may very much contribute to their usefulness. It is necessary that you carefully consider the state of your flocks, and bring them such truths as will best suit their present circumstances. In order to this, you will observe their condition, their faults, their snares, and their griefs, that you may "speak a word in season," and that, if any remarkable providence occur among your people, you may make a suitable improvement of it. It will be useful to consider the different ages and circumstances of your people, and what lessons of piety may be inculcated on each; what exhortations should be given to the communicants, to those who are under the bonds of the covenant; what advice should be addressed to the aged; what admonitions to the poor, to the rich, to the worldly, and to those who are in public situations; what consolations should be afforded to the afflicted; and what instruction may be necessary, with respect to the personal callings of your hearers. Above all, the young must not be forgotten: you will employ all possible means to cultivate early piety. Yea, you may do well to make it understood that you would willingly be informed, by any persons or societies in your flocks, what subjects they may wish to hear explained. By giving them sermons on such subjects, you will at least very much edify those who requested them; and it is probable many other persons besides.

In studying your sermons, it might be profitable at the close of every paragraph to pause, and endeavor, with ejaculations to heaven and self-examination, to feel some impression of the truths contained in that paragraph on your own mind, before you proceed any farther. By such a practice, the hours which you spend in composing a sermon, will prove to you so many hours of devotion; the day in which you have made a sermon, will even leave upon your mind such a savor as a day of prayer commonly does. When you come to preach the sermon, you will do it with great liberty and assurance; and the truths thus prepared will be likely to come with more sensible warmth and life upon the auditory—from the heart, and to the heart! A famous preacher used to say, “I never dare to preach a sermon to others till I have first got some good by it myself.” And I will add, that such a method is most likely to render it useful to others. Let the saying of the ancients be remembered, “He that trifles in the pulpit, shall weep in hell;” and the modern saying, “Cold preachers make bold sinners.”

How much good may be done by your visits! It would be well for you to impose it as a law upon yourselves, “Never to make an unprofitable visit.” Even when you pay a visit merely for the sake of civility or entertainment, it would be easy for you to observe this law: “That you will drop some sentence or other, which may be good for the use of edifying, before you leave the company.” There have been pastors who have been able to say, that they scarce ever went into a house among their people without some essay or purpose to do good before they left it.

The same rule might properly be observed with such as come to us, as well as with those whom we visit.

Why should any of our people ever come near us, without our contriving to speak something to them that may be for their advantage? Peter Martyr, having spent many days in Bucer's house, published this report of his visit: "I can truly affirm, that I never left his table without some addition to my knowledge!" I make no doubt that the observation of this rule may be very consistent with an affable and agreeable conversation. But let it be remembered, that "What are but jests in the mouth of the people, are blasphemies in the mouth of the priest."

In your visits, take a particular notice of the widow, the orphan, and the afflicted, and afford them all possible relief.

When any peculiar calamity has befallen any one, it is a suitable time to visit such a person, to direct and persuade him to hear the voice of God in the calamity, and to comply with the intent and errand upon which it comes. Another very proper time for a visit, is when any special deliverance has been received. Those who have been thus favored, should be admonished to contrive some remarkable manner in which they may express their thankfulness for the deliverance; nor should you leave them until such a determination be made. The handmaids of the Lord, who are near the hour of difficulty and danger, may on this account be very proper objects for your visits. At such a time they are in much distress; the approaching hour of trouble threatens to be their dying hour. The counsels that shall exactly instruct them how to prepare for a dying hour, will now, if ever, be attentively heard; and there are precious promises of God, upon which they should also now be taught to live. To bring them these pro-

mises will be the work of a "good angel," and will cause you to be welcomed by them as such.

CATECHISING is a noble exercise ; it will insensibly bring you into a way to "do good," that surpasses all expression. Your sermons will be very much lost upon an uncatechised people. Nor will your people mind so much what you address to them from the pulpit, as what you speak to them in the more condescending and familiar way of applying the answers of the catechism. Never did any minister repent of his labor in catechising ; thousands have blessed God for the wonderful success which has attended it. The most honorable man of God should consider it no abasement or abatement of his honor, to stoop to this way of teaching. Yea, some eminent pastors in their old age, when other labors have been too hard for them, have, like the famous old Gerson, wholly given themselves up to catechising.

Those pastors who so love a glorious Christ as to regard his word, "Feed my lambs," will vary their methods of carrying on this exercise, according to particular circumstances. Some have chosen the way of pastoral visits ; and from the memorials of one who long since did so, and afterward left his advice to his son upon this subject, I will transcribe the following passages :

DIRECTIONS FOR PASTORAL VISITS.

You may resolve to visit all the families belonging to your congregation ; taking one afternoon in a week for that purpose ; and it may be proper to give previous notice to each family that you intend at such a time to visit them. On visiting a family, you may endeavor, with addresses as forcible and respectful as pos-

sible, to treat with every person particularly about their everlasting interests.

First, you may discourse with the elder people upon such points as you think most proper with them. Especially charge them to maintain family prayer; and obtain their promise of establishing it, if it has been hitherto neglected; yea, pray with them, that you may show them how to pray, as well as obtain their purposes for it. You may likewise press upon them the care of instructing their children and servants in the holy religion of our Savior, to bring them up for him.

If any with whom you should have spoken are absent, you may frequently leave one or two solemn texts of the sacred Scripture, which you may think most suitable for them; desiring some one present affectionately to remember you to them, and from you to recommend to them that oracle of God.

You may then call for the children and servants; and putting to them such questions of the catechism as you think fit, you may, from the answers, make lively applications to them, for engaging them to the fear of God. You may frequently obtain from them promises relating to secret prayer, reading of the Scriptures, and obedience to their parents and masters. You may also frequently set before them the proposals of the new covenant, after you have labored for their conviction and awakening, till with floods of tears they expressly declare their consent to it, and their acceptance of it.

Some of the younger people you may request to bring their Bibles, and read to you from thence two or three verses, to which you may direct them; this will try whether or not they can read well. You may then encourage them to think on such things as you remark

from the passage, and never to forget those "faithful sayings" of God. You may sometimes leave with them some serious question, which you may tell them they shall not answer to you, but to themselves; such as the following: "What have I been doing ever since I came into the world, about the great errand upon which God sent me into the world?" "If God should now call me out of the world, what would become of me throughout eternal ages?" "Have I ever yet by faith carried my perishing soul to my only Savior, both for righteousness and salvation?"

You will enjoy the wonderful presence of God in this undertaking; and will seldom leave a family without having observed many tears of devotion shed by all sorts of persons in it. As you can seldom visit more than four or five families in an afternoon, the work may be as laborious as any part of your ministry.

My son, I advise you to set a special value on that part of your ministry which is to be discharged in pastoral visits. You will not only *do* good, but also *get* good, by your conversation with all sorts of persons, in thus visiting them "from house to house." And you will never more "walk in the Spirit," than when you thus walk among your flock, to do what good you can among them.

In your visits an incredible amount of good may be done by distributing little books of piety. You may, without much expense, be furnished with such books, to suit all persons and circumstances; books for the old and for the young—for persons under afflictions or desertions—for persons who are under the power of particular vices—for those who neglect domestic religion—for sea-faring persons—for the erroneous—for those whom you would quicken and prepare to

approach the table of the Lord, and catechisms for the ignorant. You may remarkably enforce your admonitions, by leaving suitable books in the hands of those with whom you have conversed; you may give them to understand, that you would be still considered as conversing with them by these books, after you have left them. And in this way you may speak more than you have time to do in any personal interview; yea, sometimes, more than you would wish to do. By good books a salt of piety is scattered about a neighborhood.

Pastors, uphold and cherish good schools in your towns! And be prevailed upon occasionally to visit the schools. That holy man, Mr. Thomas White, expressed a desire, "that able and zealous ministers would sometimes preach at the schools; because preaching is the converting ordinance; and the children will be obliged to hear with more attention in the school than in the public congregation; and the ministers might here condescend to such expressions as might produce most effect upon them, and yet not be so fit for a public congregation." I have read the following account of one who was awakened by this advice to act accordingly: "At certain times he successively visited the schools. When he went to a school, he first offered a prayer for the children, as much adapted to their condition as he could make it. Then he went through the catechism, or as much of it as he thought necessary, making the several children repeat the several answers; but he divided the questions, that every article in the answers might be understood by them, expecting them to answer, Yes, or No, to each of these divisions. He also put to them such questions as would make them see and own their

duties, and often express a resolution to perform them. Then he preached a short sermon to them, exceedingly plain, on some suitable Scripture, with all possible ingenuity and earnestness, in order to excite their attentive regard. After this he singled out a number of scholars, perhaps eight or ten, and bade each of them turn to a certain Scripture, which he made them read to the whole school; giving them to see, by his brief remarks upon it, that it contained something which it particularly concerned children to notice. Then he concluded with a short prayer for a blessing on the school, and on the tutors."

While we are upon the subject of visiting, I would observe, that you will not fail to visit the *poor*; as well as the *rich*; and often mention the condition of the poor, in your conversation with the rich. Keep a list of them. Recollect, that although the wind does not feed any one, yet that it turns the mill which grinds the corn, the food of the poor. When conversing with the rich, you may do this for the poor who are on your list.

In visiting the poor, you will take occasion to dispense your alms among them. All ministers are not alike furnished for alms, but all should be disposed for them. They that have small families, or large interests, ought to be shining examples of liberality to the poor, and pour down their alms upon them like the showers of heaven. All should endeavor to do what they can in this way. What says Nazianzen of his reverend father's alms-deeds? They will find, that the more they do, (provided it be done with discretion,) the more they are able to do; the loaves will multiply in the distribution. This bounty of yours to the poor will procure a wonderful esteem and success to your

ministry. It will be an irrefragable demonstration that you believe what you speak concerning all the duties of Christianity, but particularly those of liberality, a faithful discharge of our stewardship, and a mind weaned from the love of this world; it will demonstrate your belief of a future state; it will vindicate you from the imputation of a worldly man; it will embolden and fortify you when you call upon others to do good, and to abound in those sacrifices with which God is well pleased.

You will do well to keep a watchful eye on the disorders which may arise and increase in your neighborhood. Among other ways of suppressing these things, you may form societies for this purpose; obtain a fit number of prudent, pious, well-disposed men, to associate with this intention, and employ their discretion and activity for your assistance in these holy purposes.

How serviceable may ministers be to one another, and to all the churches, in their several associations! Indeed, it is a pity that there should ever be the least occasional "meeting of ministers," without some useful thing proposed in it.

Finally.—After all the generous essays and labors to do good that may fill your lives, your people will probably treat you with ingratitude. Your salaries will be meaner than those at Geneva. They will neglect you; they will oppress you; they will withhold from you what they have engaged, and you have expected. You have now one more opportunity to do good, and so to glorify your Savior. Your patience, O ye tried servants of God, your patience will do it wonderfully! To "bear evil" is to "do good." The more patient you are under ill usage, the more you exhibit a glo-

rious Christ to your people, in your conformity to your adorable Savior. The more conformed you are to him, the more prepared you are, perhaps, for some amendment of your condition in this world, most certainly for the rewards of the heavenly world, when you shall appear before the Lord, who says, "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience."

It was said of Ignatius, "that he carried Christ about with him in his heart:" and this I will say, if to represent a glorious Christ to the view, the love, and the admiration of all people, be the grand intention of your life; if you are desirous to be a star to lead men to Christ; if you are exquisitely studious that the holiness and yet the gentleness of a glorious Christ may shine in your conversation; if in your public discourses you do with rapture bring in the mention of a glorious Christ in every paragraph, and on every occasion where he is to be spoken of; and if in your private conversation you contrive to insinuate something of his glories and praises wherever it may be decently introduced; finally, if when you find that a glorious Christ is the more considered and acknowledged by your means, it fills you with "joy unspeakable and full of glory," and you exclaim, "Lord, this is my desired happiness!" Truly, you then live to good purpose, you "do good" emphatically!

There was a worthy minister whom the great Cranmer designed for preferment, and he gave this reason of his design: "He seeks nothing, he longs for nothing, he dreams about nothing, but Jesus Christ." Verily, such "men of Christ" are "men of God;" they are the favorites of Heaven, and shall be favored with opportunities to do good above any men in the world:

they are the men whom the King of heaven will delight to honor.

PROPOSALS TO CHURCHES FOR DOING GOOD.

We have already proposed to the PASTORS of churches various ways of doing good; we shall now lay before the CHURCHES themselves some proposal of objects, in which they may do well to join their pastors.

DAYS OF PRAYER, occasionally observed, for the express purpose of obtaining the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God on the rising generation, have had a marvellous efficacy in producing a religious posterity in the land, and "a seed accounted to the Lord for a generation." Such an acknowledgment of the necessity and excellency of supernatural grace would be a very probable preparative and introduction to the communication of it; and when the children see their parents thus earnestly seeking the grace of God for them, it would have a natural tendency to awaken them to an earnest seeking of it for themselves. The sermons, also, preached by the ministers on such solemn occasions, would, probably, be very awakening ones. That this proposal has been so little attended to, is lamentable and remarkable: but "they all slumbered and slept."

There is another proposal which has been tendered to all our churches, and regarded by some of them:

That the several churches, having, in an instrument proper for the purpose, made a catalogue of such things as have indisputably been found amiss among them, do with all seriousness and solemnity pass their votes, that they account such things to be very offensive evils, and that, renouncing all dependence on their own strength to avoid such evils, they humbly implore the

help of divine grace, to assist them in watching against the said evils both in themselves and in one another: and that the communicants resolve, frequently to reflect upon these their acknowledgments and protestations, as perpetual monitors to them, to prevent the miscarriages by which too many professors are so easily overtaken.

It has been considered, that such humble recognitions of duty will not only be accepted by our God, as declarations for him, upon which he will declare for us; but also, that they are the way of the new covenant, for obtaining assistance to perform our duty.

A particular church may be an illustrious pillar of the truth, by considering what important truths may call for special, signal, open testimonies; and they may excite their pastors to the composing of such testimonies, and likewise assist them in the publication of them. It is probable that God would accompany such testimonies with a marvellous efficacy to suppress growing errors and evils. A proposal of this nature may be worthy of some consideration.

1. It were desirable that every particular church should be furnished with a stock, that may be a constant and ready fund for the propagation of religion; and that every minister would use his best endeavors, both by his own contribution, according to his ability, and by applying to well-disposed persons under his influence, to increase the stock, either in the way of public collections made at certain periods, or in that of more private and occasional communications.

2. This evangelical treasury may be lodged in the hands of the deacons of the respective churches in which it is collected; who are to keep exact accounts of the receipts and disbursements, and let nothing be

drawn from it without the knowledge and consent of the church to which it belongs.

3. The first and main intention of this evangelical treasury is to be, the propagation of religion; and therefore, when any attempts of usefulness are to be made on unevangelized places, the neighboring ministers may consult each of the churches, what proportion they may allow, out of their evangelical treasury, toward the support of so noble an undertaking.

4. This evangelical treasury may be applied to other pious uses, and especially to such as any particular church may think fit, for the service of religion in their own vicinity: such as the sending of Bibles and catechisms to be dispersed among the poor, where it may be thought necessary. Likewise giving assistance to new congregations, in their first attempts to build meeting-houses for the public worship of God with scriptural purity.

Query—Our churches have their sacramental collections, and it is not fit indeed that they should be without them. The primitive Christians did the same: Justin Martyr informs us of the “collections,” and Tertullian of the “gifts of piety,” which were made on such occasions. But would not our churches do well to augment their liberality in their grateful and joyful collections at the table of the Lord, and to resolve that what is now collected shall be part of their evangelical treasury; not only for the supply of the table and the relief of the poor, but also for such other services to the kingdom of God as they may, from time to time, find occasion to countenance?

THE DUTIES OF SCHOOL TEACHERS.

The SCHOOL TEACHER has many opportunities of doing good. God make him sensible of his obligations!

We read, that "the little ones have their angels." It is hard work to keep a school; but it is God's work, and it may be so managed as to be like the work of angels. Melchior Adams properly styled it "An office most laborious, yet to God most pleasing."

Teachers! will you not regard the children under your care, as committed to you by the glorious Lord, with such a charge as this: "Take them, and bring them up for me, and I will pay you your wages!" Whenever a new scholar comes under your care, you may say, "Here my Lord sends me another object, for whom I may do something, that he may be useful in the world." Suffer little children to come unto you, and consider what you may do, instrumentally, that of such may be the kingdom of heaven.

Let it be your grand design, to instill into their minds the documents of piety. Consider it as their chief interest, and yours also, that they may so know the Holy Scriptures as to become wise to salvation. Embrace every opportunity of dropping some honey from the rock upon them. Happy the children, and as happy the teacher, where they who relate the history of their conversion may say, "There was a school-teacher who brought us to Christ." You have been told, "Certainly, it is a nobler work to make the little ones know their Savior than know their letters. The lessons of Jesus are nobler than the lessons of Cato.

CATECHISING should be a *frequent*, at least a *weekly* exercise in the school; and it should be conducted in the most edifying, applicatory, and admonitory manner.

Dr Reynolds, in a funeral sermon for an eminent school-teacher, has the following passage, worthy to be written in letters of gold: "If grammar schools have holy and learned men set over them, not only the minds,

but also the souls of the children might there be enriched, and the work both of learning and of grace be early commenced in them." In order to this, let it be proposed, that you not only pray with your scholars daily, but also take occasion, from the public sermons, and from remarkable occurrences in your neighborhood, frequently to inculcate the lessons of piety on the children.

Instructors in colleges may do well to converse with each of their pupils alone, with all possible solemnity and affection, concerning their internal state, concerning repentance for sin, and faith in Jesus Christ, and to bring them to express resolutions of serious piety. You may do a thousand things to render your pupils orthodox in sentiment, regular in practice, and qualified for public service.

I have read of a teacher who made it his constant practice, in every recitation, to take occasion from something or other that occurred, to drop at least one sentence that had a tendency to promote the fear of God in their hearts. This method sometimes cost him a good deal of study, but the good effect sufficiently recompensed him for it.

I should be glad to see certain authors received into the grammar schools as classical, which are not generally admitted there, such as *Castalio* in the Latin tongue, and *Posselius* in the Greek; and I could wish, with some modern writers, that "a north-west passage" for the attainment of Latin might be discovered; that instead of a journey which might be despatched in a few days, they might not be obliged to wander, like the children of Israel, many years in the wilderness. I might recite the complaint of Austin, "that little boys are taught in the schools the filthy actions

of the pagan gods, for reciting which," said he, "I was called a boy of promise;" or the complaint of Luther, "that our schools are pagan, rather than Christian." I might mention what a late author says, "I knew an aged and eminent schoolmaster, who, after keeping a school about fifty years, said, with a sad countenance, that it was a great trouble to him that he had spent so much time in reading pagan authors to his scholars, and wished it were customary to read such a book as Duport's verses on Job, rather than Homer, &c. I pray God to put it into the hearts of my countrymen to purge our schools; that instead of learning vain fictions and filthy stories, they may become acquainted with the word of God, and with books containing grave sayings, and things which may make them truly wise and useful in the world."

Among the occasions for promoting religion in the scholars, one in the *writing schools* deserves peculiar notice. I have read of an atrocious sinner who was converted to God by accidentally reading the following sentence of Austin written in a window: "He who has promised pardon to the penitent sinner, has not promised repentance to the presumptuous one." Who can tell what good may be done to the young scholar by a sentence in his copy-book? Let their copies be composed of sentences worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance—of sentences which shall contain the brightest maxims of wisdom, worthy to be written on the fleshly tables of their hearts, to be graven with the point of a diamond there. God has blessed such sentences to many scholars; they have been useful to them all their days.

In the grammar school, also, the scholars may be directed, for their exercises, to turn into Latin such

passages as may be useful for their instruction in the principles of Christianity, and furnish them with supplies from "the tower of David." Their letters also may be on the subjects which may be friendly to the interests of virtue.

I will add, it is very desirable to manage the *discipline* of the school by means of rewards, rather than of punishments. Many methods of rewarding the diligent and deserving may be invented; and a boy of an ingenious temper, by the expectation of reward, will do his best. You esteem Quintillian. Hear him: "Use stripes sparingly; rather let the youth be stimulated by praise, and by the distinctions conferred on his classmates." If a fault must be punished, let instruction, both to the delinquent and to the spectator, accompany the correction. Let the odious name of the sin which enforced the correction be declared; and let nothing be done in anger, but with every mark of tenderness and concern.

PROPOSALS TO PHYSICIANS.

The physician enjoys many opportunities of doing good, and so rendering himself "a beloved physician." For this purpose we shall offer our advice.

From pious physicians may be expected a charity and a usefulness which may entitle them to a remembrance in that "Book of Life," in which a name will be deemed far more valuable than any which are recorded in "The lives of illustrious physicians."

By serious and shining piety in your own example, you will bear a glorious testimony in the cause of God and religion. You will glorify the God of nature, and the only Savior. Your acquaintance with nature will

indeed be your condemnation, if you do it not. Nothing is so *unnatural* as to be *irreligious*. The religion of the physician has the least reason of any under heaven to be an "irreligion." They have acted the most unreasonable part, who have given occasion for that complaint of Christians, "Where there are three physicians, there are three atheists."

Gentlemen, you will never account yourselves such adepts as to be at a stand in your studies, and make no further progress in your inquiries into the nature of diseases and their remedies. "A physician arrived at his full growth," looks dangerously and ominously. You will be diligent, studious, inquisitive; and continue to read much, think more, and pray most of all; and be solicitous to invent and dispense something very considerable for the good of mankind, which none before you had discovered: be solicitous to make some addition to the treasures of your noble profession. To obtain the honor of being a *Sydenham* may not be in your power; yet "to do something" is a laudable ambition.

By the benefit they expect from you, and by the charms of your polite education and manners, you are sometimes introduced into the familiar acquaintance of great men; persons of the first quality entertain you with freedom and friendship. What an advantage does this furnish you for doing good! The poor Jews, both in the east and the west, have procured many advantages by means of their countrymen, who have risen to be physicians to the princes of the countries in which they reside. Your permission "to feel the pulse" of eminent persons, may enable you to promote many a good work; you need not be told what; you will soon perceive excellent methods, if you will only

deliberate upon it: "What proposals may I make to my patient, by attending to which, he may do good in the world?" You know how ready the sick are to hear of good proposals, and how seasonable it is to urge such upon them, when the commencement of recovery from sickness calls for their gratitude to the God of their health. And for persons also who are in health, you may find "seasonable times to drop a hint."

Physicians are frequently men of universal learning; they have sufficient ability, and sometimes opportunity to write books on a vast variety of subjects, whereby knowledge and virtue may be greatly advanced in the world. A catalogue of books written by learned physicians, on various subjects besides those of their own profession, would in itself almost make a volume. In the great army of learned physicians, many have published most valuable works on the "word which the Lord has given," and for the service of his church, and of the world. Physicians of such distinguished merit deserve the grateful remembrance of every benevolent heart. I propose them for imitation, that many may follow such examples.

Physicians have innumerable opportunities to assist the poor, and to give them advice *gratis*. It was a noble saying of Cicero, "A man cannot have a better fortune than to be able, nor a better temper than to be willing, to save many." But I will set before you a higher consideration than that with which a pagan was ever acquainted. The more charity, compassion, and condescension with which you treat the poor, the nearer will you approach to the greatest and highest of all glories—an imitation of your adorable Savior. You will readily say, "Why should I esteem that mean,

which reflected honor on Christ?" In comparison of this consolation, it will be a small thing to say to you, that your coming among the poor will be to them like the descent of the Angel of Bethesda. We will not presume to prescribe to you what good you shall do to the poor; but beg leave to enter an objection against your taking any fees on the Lord's day; because the time is not yours, but the Lord's.

When we consider how much the lives of men are in the hands of God, what a dependence we have on the God of our health, for our cure when we have lost it; what strong and remarkable proofs we have had of angels, by their communications or operations, contributing to the cure of the diseases with which mortals have been oppressed; and the marvellous efficacy of prayer for the recovery of a sick brother who has not sinned a "sin unto death:"—what better thing can be recommended to a physician, who desires to "do good," than this—to be a man of prayer? In your daily and secret prayer, carry every one of your patients, as you would your own children, to the glorious Lord our healer, for his healing mercies; place them, as far as your prayers will do it, under the beams of the "Sun of Righteousness." And as any new case of your patients may occur, especially if there be any difficulty in it, why should you not make your particular and solicitous application to Heaven for direction? "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; nor is it in man that walketh, to direct his steps; nor in man that healeth, to perform his cure." Hippocrates advised physicians, when they visited their patients, to consider whether there might not be something supernatural in the disease. Truly, in some sense, this is always the case, and should be so considered.

What a heavenly life might you lead, if your profession were carried on with as many visits to Heaven as you pay to your patients ! A famous Jew of the former century, published at Venice, a book entitled, "Precious Stones." There are several prayers in the book, and among them a pretty long one "For physicians when they go to visit their patients." Surely Christianity will not, in her devotions, fall short of Judaism !

We read that "heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop ; but a good word maketh it glad. A cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine ; but a broken spirit drieth up the bones." Baglivi is not the only physician who has made the observation, "that a great many of our diseases either arise from a weight of cares lying on the minds of men, or are thereby increased. Some diseases that seem incurable, are easily cured by agreeable conversation. Disorders of the mind first bring diseases on the stomach ; and so the whole mass of blood gradually becomes infected ; and as long as the mental cause continues, the diseases may indeed change their forms, but they rarely quit the patients." Tranquillity of mind will do wonderful things toward the relief of bodily maladies. It is not without reason that Hosman insists on tranquillity of mind as the chief among the "means to promote longevity ;" and says that this is the meaning of that passage : "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life." They who have practised the "art of curing by expectation," have made experiments of what the mind will do toward the cure of the body ; this may be also known by practising the "art of consolation." I propose, then, that the physician endeavor to find out, by all possible ingenuity of conversation, what matter of

anxiety there may have been upon the mind of the patient, that has rendered his life burdensome. Having discovered the burden, use all possible means to take it off. Offer him such thoughts as may be the best *anodynes* for his distressed mind; especially the "right thoughts of the righteous," and the means of obtaining composure of mind upon religious principles. Give him a prospect, if you can, of some deliverance from his distresses, or some abatement of them. Excite in him as pleasing thoughts as possible; scatter the clouds, and remove the loads with which his mind is perplexed, especially by representing and magnifying the mercy of God, in Christ, to him. It is possible, sir, that in this way also you may find abundant opportunities of usefulness, by doing yourself, or by bringing others to do kindness to the miserable.

What should hinder you from considering the *souls* of your patients; their spiritual health; what they have done, and what they have to do, that they may be on good terms with Heaven? You may take occasion, from their natural disorders, to affect your own mind, and theirs also, with a sense of our corresponding moral ones. You may make your conversation with them a vehicle for conveying such admonitions of piety as may be most needful for them, that they may be found neither unprepared for death, nor unthankful and unfruitful, if their lives should be prolonged. This you may do, without any intrusion on the office of the minister; on the contrary, you may at the same time do a very good office for the minister, as well as for the patient; and may inform the minister when, where, and how he may be very serviceable among the miserable, with whose cases he might otherwise remain unacquainted. The "art of healing" was,

you know, first brought into a system by men who had the "care of souls;" and I know not why those who profess that noble "art" should wholly cast off that "care." Perhaps you remember to have read of a king who was also a physician, and who gave this reason why the Greeks had diseases among them which remained so much uncured: "Because they neglected their souls, the chief thing of all." For my part, I know not why the physician should wholly neglect the souls of his patients. And I desire to encourage each physician himself continually to go to God our Savior, and as far as possible bring all his patients to him also.

Finally.—An industrious and ingenious writer of your profession has a passage which I will here insert, because very many of you can speak the same language; and by inserting it, I hope to increase the number.

"I know no poor creature that ever came to me, in the whole course of my practice, that once went from me without my desired help, *gratis*. And I have accounted the restoration of such a poor and wretched creature a greater blessing to me than if I had procured the wealth of both the Indies. I cannot so well express myself concerning this matter, as I can conceive it; but I am sure I should have been more pleased, and had a greater satisfaction, in seeing such a helpless creature restored to his desired health, than if I had found a very valuable treasure. As I can never repent of the good which I have done this way, so I resolve to continue the same practice; for I certainly know that I have had the signal blessing of God attending my endeavors."

• PROPOSALS TO RICH MEN.

“I will get me unto the RICH MEN, and will speak unto them,” for they will know the ways to “do good,” and will think what they shall be able to say when they come into the judgment of their God. A person of quality, quoting that passage, “The desire of a man is his kindness,” invited me so to read it, “The only desirable thing in a man is his goodness.” How happy would the world be, if every person of quality were to become of this persuasion! It is an article in my commission, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.” In pursuance thereof, I will remind rich men of the opportunities to “do good” with which God, who gives power to get wealth, has favored and enriched them. It is a very good account that has been sometimes given of a good man: “As to the wealth of this world, he knew no good in it, but the doing of good with it.” Yea, those men who have had very little goodness in them, yet in describing “the manners of the age,” in which perhaps they themselves have had too deep a share, have seen occasion to subscribe and publish this prime dictate of reason: “We are none the better for any thing, barely for possessing it; but it is the application of it that gives every thing its value. Whoever buries his talent betrays a sacred trust, and defrauds those who stand in need of it.” Sirs, you cannot but acknowledge that it is the sovereign God who has bestowed upon you the riches which distinguish you. A devil himself, when he saw a rich man, could not but make this acknowledgment to the God of heaven: “Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his

substance is increased in the land." It is also to be hoped that you are not unmindful that the riches in your possession are some of the talents of which you must give an account to the glorious Lord who has entrusted you with them; and that you will give your account with grief, and not with joy, if it should be found that all your property has been laid out to gratify the appetites of the flesh, and little or nothing of it consecrated to the service of God, and of his kingdom in the world. It was said to the priests of old, when the servants were assigned them, "Unto you they are given as a gift for the Lord." This may be said of all our estates: what God gives us, is not given us for ourselves, but, "for the Lord." "When God's gifts to us are multiplied, our obligations to give are multiplied." Indeed there is hardly any professor of Christianity so vicious that he will not confess that all his property is to be used for honest purposes, and part of it for pious ones. If any plead their poverty to excuse and exempt them from doing any thing this way; O thou poor widow with thy two mites, immortalized in the history of the Gospel, thou shalt "rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it;" and let them also know that they take a course to condemn and confine themselves to eternal *poverty*.

But the main question is, What proportion of a man's income is to be devoted to pious uses? And now, let it not seem a "hard saying," if I tell you that *a tenth part* is the least that you can bring under a more solemn dedication to the Lord; for whom, in one sense, we are to lay out our all. A farthing less would make an enlightened and considerate Christian suspicious of his incurring the danger of sacrilege. By the pious uses for which your tenths are thus challenged, I do

not intend only, the maintenance of the evangelical ministry, but also the relief of the miserable, whom our merciful Savior has made the receivers of his rents; together with all that is to be more directly done for the preserving and promoting of piety in the world. Since there is a part of every man's revenues due to the glorious Lord, and to purposes of piety, it is not fit that the determination of *what part* it must be, should be left to such hearts as ours. My friend, thou hast, it may be, too high an opinion of thy own wisdom and goodness, if nothing but thy own carnal heart is to determine what proportion of thy revenues are to be laid out for Him, whom thou art so ready to forget when he has filled thee. But if the Lord himself, to whom thou art but a steward, has fixed on any part of our usual income for himself, as it is most reasonable that he should have the fixing of it, certainly a tenth will be found the least that he has called for. Long before the Mosaic dispensation of the law, we find that this was Jacob's vow: "The Lord shall be my God, and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." It seems we do not sufficiently declare that "the Lord is our God," if we do not give a tenth to him. And how can we approve ourselves "Israelites indeed," if we slight such an example as that of our father Jacob? I will ascend a little higher. In one text we read that our father Abraham "gave Melchisedek the tenth of all." In another text we read of our Savior Jesus, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek." From hence I form this conclusion: the rights of Melchisedek belong to our Jesus, the royal high priest now officiating for us in the heavens. The tenths were the rights of Melchisedek; therefore the tenths belong to our Jesus. I do in

my conscience believe that this argument cannot be answered; and the man who attempts it, seems to darken the evidence of his being one of the true children of Abraham.

It is very certain that the pagans used to *decimate* for sacred uses. Pliny tells us that the Arabians did so. Xenophon informs us that the Grecians had the same practice. You find the custom to be as ancient as the pen of Herodotus can make it. Festus says, "The ancients offered to their gods the tenth of every thing." Christian, wilt thou do less for thy God than the poor perishing pagans did for theirs? "O tell it not"—but this I will tell; that they who have conscientiously employed their tenths in pious uses, have usually been remarkably blessed in their estates, by the providence of God. The blessing has been sometimes delayed, with some trial of their patience; and their belief of the future state has been sometimes tried, by their meeting with losses and disappointments. But then, their *little* has been so blessed as to be still a *competency*; and God has so favored them with contentment, that it has yielded more than the abundance of many others. Very frequently too, they have been rewarded with remarkable success in their affairs, and increase of their property; and even in this world have seen the fulfilment of those promises: "Cast thy bread upon the waters"—thy grain into the moist ground—"and thou shalt find it after many days." "Honor the Lord with thy substance; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty." History has given us many delightful examples of those who have had their *decimations* followed and rewarded by a surprising prosperity of their affairs. Obscure mechanics and husbandmen have risen to estates, of which once they had not the

most distant expectation. The excellent Gouge, in his treatise, entitled, "The surest and safest way of thriving," has collected some such examples. The Jewish proverb, "Tithe, and be rich," would be oftener verified, if more frequently practised. "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not pour out a blessing upon you."

But let the demand of "liberal things" grow upon you: a *tenth* I have called the *least*; for some it is much *too little*. Men of large incomes, who would not "sow to their flesh, and of the flesh reap corruption," may and will often go beyond this proportion. Some rise to a *fifth*; and the religious countess of Warwick would not stop at any thing short of a *third*. Gentlemen of fortune, who are my readers, would perhaps excuse me if I were to carry them no higher than this, and to say nothing to them of a Johannes Eleemosynarius, who annually made a distribution of *all* to pious uses; and having settled his affairs, said, "I bless God that I have now nothing left but my Lord and Master, Christ, whom I long to be with, and to whom I can now fly with unentangled wings." Yet I will mention to them the example of some eminent merchants, who having obtained moderate and competent estates, have resolved never to be richer. They have carried on brisk and extensive trades, but whatever profits raised their incomes above the fixed sum, they have entirely devoted to pious uses. Were any of them losers by this conduct? Not one.

The Christian emperor Tiberius II. was famous for his religious bounties: his empress thought him even profuse in them. But he told her that he should never want money so long as, in obedience to a glorious Christ, he should supply the necessities of the poor,

and abound in religious benevolence. Once, immediately after he had made a liberal distribution, he unexpectedly found a mighty treasure, and at the same time tidings were brought to him of the death of a very rich man who had bequeathed to him all his wealth. And men in far humbler stations can relate very many and interesting anecdotes of this nature, even from their own happy experience. I cannot forbear transcribing some lines of my honored Gouge on this occasion :

“I am verily persuaded that there is scarcely any man who gives to the poor proportionably to what God has bestowed on him, but, if he observe the dealings of God’s providence toward him, will find the same doubled and redoubled upon him in temporal blessings. I dare challenge all the world to produce one instance (or at least any considerable number of instances) of a merciful man, whose charity has undone him. On the contrary, as the more living wells are exhausted, the more freely they spring and flow ; so the substance of charitable men frequently multiplies in the very distribution : even as the five loaves and few fishes multiplied while being broken and distributed, and as the widow’s oil increased by being poured out.”

I will add a consideration which, methinks, will act as a powerful motive upon the common feelings of human nature. Let the rich men, who are not “rich toward God,” especially such as have no children of their own to make their heirs, consider the vile ingratitude with which their successors will treat them ; sirs, they will hardly allow you a tombstone ; but, wallowing in the wealth you have left them, and complaining that you left it no sooner, they will insult

your memory, and ridicule your economy and parsimony. How much wiser would it be for you to do good with your estates while you live, and at your death to dispose of them in such a manner as shall embalm your names to posterity, and that you may, through grace, hear God say, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

I will only annex the compliment of a certain person to his friend, upon his accession to an estate: "Much good may it do you; that is, much good may you do with it."

To relieve the necessities of the poor is a thing acceptable to the compassionate God, who has given to you what he might have given to them, and has given it to you that you might have the honor and pleasure of imparting it to them; and who has said, "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord." The more you regard the command and example of a glorious Christ in what you do this way, the more assurance you have that in the day of God you shall joyfully hear him saying, "You have done it unto me." And the more humble, silent, reserved modesty you express, concealing even from the left hand what is done with the right, the more you are assured of a great reward in the heavenly world. Such liberal men, it is observed, are generally long-lived men; ("gathering the fruit relieves the tree;") and at last they pass from this into everlasting life.

PROPOSALS TO LADIES.

The true *Lady* is one who feeds the poor, and relieves their indigence.* In the days of primitive Chris-

* The following is supposed to be the etymology of the word

tianity, ladies of the first quality would seek out the sick, visit hospitals, see what help they wanted, and assist them with an admirable alacrity. What a "good report" have the mother and sister of Nazianzen obtained from his pen, for their unwearied bounty to the poor! Empresses themselves have stooped to relieve the miserable, and never appeared so truly great as when they thus stooped.

A very proper season for your alms is, when you keep days of prayer; that your prayers and your alms may go up together as a memorial before the Lord. Verily, there are *prayers* in *alms*: and, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? saith the Lord." The expression of the beggar among the Jews was, "Deserve something by me:" among us it might be, "Obtain something by me."

MISCELLANEOUS PROPOSALS TO GENTLEMEN.

THERE is a certain city in which, it is said, every house has a box hanging by a chain, on which is written, "Remember the poor;" and the people seldom conclude a bargain without putting something into the box. The deacons have the key, and once a quarter go round the city and take out the money. When that city was in imminent danger, a man of moderate character was heard to say, "that he was of opinion God

Lady. It was at first Leafdian, from Leaf or Laf. which signifies a loaf of bread, and D'ian to serve. It was afterward corrupted to Lafdy, and at length to Lady. So that it appears, the original meaning of the term implies *one who distributes bread.*

would preserve that city from being destroyed, if it were only for the great charity which its inhabitants express to the poor." It is the richest city of the richest country, for its size, that ever existed; a city which is thought to spend, annually, in charitable uses, more than all the revenues which the fine country of the grand duke of Tuscany brings in to its arbitrary master. "The hands of the poor are the treasury-box of Christ."

When you dispense your alms to the poor, who know what it is to pray, you may oblige them to pray for you, by name, every day. It is an excellent thing to have the blessing of those who have been ready to perish thus coming upon you. Observe here a surprising sense in which you may be "praying always." You are so, even while you are sleeping, if those whom you have thus obliged are praying for you. And now look for the accomplishment of that word: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth."

Very frequently your alms are dispersed among such persons as very much need admonitions of piety. Cannot you contrive to mingle a spiritual charity with your temporal bounty? Perhaps you may discourse with them about the state of their souls, and may obtain from them (for which you have now a singular advantage) some declared resolutions to do what they ought to do. Or else you may convey to them books, or tracts, which they will certainly promise to read, when you thus desire them.

Charity to the *souls* of men is undoubtedly the highest, the noblest, and the most important charity. To furnish the poor with catechisms and Bibles, is to do

for them an incalculable service. No one knows how much he may do by dispersing books of piety, and by putting into the hands of mankind such treatises of divinity as may have a tendency to make them wiser or better. It was a noble action of some good men, who, a little while ago, were at the charge of printing thirty thousand of the "Alarm to the Unconverted," written by Joseph Allein, to be given away to such as would promise to read it. A man of no great fortune has been known to give away, without much trouble, nearly a thousand books of piety every year, for many years together. Who can tell, but with the expense of a shilling, or even of a penny, you may "convert a sinner from the error of his ways, and save a soul from death?" A worse doom than to be "condemned to the mines" rests upon that soul who had rather hoard up his money than employ it on such a charity.

He who supports the office of the evangelical ministry, supports a good work, and performs one; yea, in a secondary way, performs what is done by the skilful, faithful, and laborious minister. The servant of the Lord, who is encouraged by you, will do the more good for your assistance; and what you have done for him, and in consideration of the glorious Gospel preached by him, you have done for a glorious Christ; and you shall "receive a prophet's reward." Luther said: "What you give to scholars, you give to God himself." This is still more true, when the scholars are become godly and useful preachers.

I have somewhere met with the following passage: "It was for several years the practice of a worthy gentleman, in renewing his leases, instead of making it a condition that his tenants should keep a hawk or a dog for him, to request them to keep a Bible in their houses,

and to bring up their children to read and to be catechised." *Landlords*, it is worth your consideration whether you may not in your leases insert some clauses that may serve the kingdom of God. You are his tenants in those very freeholds in which you are landlords to other men. Desire your tenants to worship God in their families.

To take a poor child, especially an orphan left in poverty, and to bestow upon him a liberal education, is an admirable charity; yea, it may draw after it a long train of good, and may interest you in all the good that shall be done by him whom you have educated.

Hence, also, what is done for schools, for colleges, and for hospitals, is done for the general good. The endowment or maintenance of these is at once to do good to many.

But, alas! how much of the silver and gold of the world is buried in hands, where it is little better than conveyed back to the mines from whence it came!

Sometimes elaborate compositions may be prepared for the press, works of great bulk, and of still greater worth, by which the best interests of knowledge and virtue may be promoted; but they lie, like the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, in silent neglect; and are likely to continue in that state, till God inspire some wealthy persons nobly to subscribe to their publication, and by this generous application of their property, to bring them abroad. The names of such noble benefactors to mankind ought to live as long as the works themselves; and where the works do any good, what these have done toward the publishing of them, ought to be "told for a memorial" of them.

I will pursue this subject still farther. It was said by Dr. Sanderson, that "idle gentlemen, and idle beg-

gars, are the pests of the commonwealth." Will you then think of some honorable and agreeable employments? I will mention one—the Pythagoreans forbade men's "eating their own brains," or "keeping their good thoughts to themselves." The incomparable Boyle observes, that "as to religious books, in general, those which have been written by laymen, have (other things being equal) been better received, and more effectual, than those published by clergymen." Mr. Boyle's were certainly so. Men of quality have frequently attained such accomplishments in languages and science, that they have become prodigies of literature. Their libraries also have been stupendous collections, approaching toward Vatican or Bodleian dimensions. How many of these have been benefactors to mankind by their admirable writings! It were much to be wished that persons of wealth and elevation would qualify themselves for the use of the pen as well as of the sword, and deserve this eulogium—"They have written excellent things." An English person of quality, in his treatise entitled, "A View of the Soul," has the following passage: "It is certainly the highest dignity, if not the greatest happiness, of which human nature is capable in the vale below, to have the soul so far enlightened, as to become the mirror, or conduit, or conveyor of God's truth to others." It is a bad motto for a man of capacity, "My understanding is unfruitful." Gentlemen, consider what subjects may most properly and usefully fall under your cultivation. Your pens will stab atheism and vice more effectually than other men's. If there be among you "those who handle the pen of the writer," they will do uncommon execution. One of them has ingeniously said, "Though I know some offices, yet I know no *truths* of religion

which, like the shew-bread, are only for the priests."

I will present to you but one proposal more, and it is this—that you would wisely choose a friend of good abilities, of warm affections, and of excellent piety, (a minister of such a character, if you can,) and entreat him, yea, oblige him to study for you, and to suggest to you opportunities to do good. Let him advise you, from time to time, what good you may do. Let him see that he never gratifies you more than by his advice on this head. If a *David* have a *seer* to perform such an office for him, one who may search for occasions of doing good, what extensive services may be done for the temple of God in the world!

Let me only add, that when gentlemen occasionally meet together, why should not their conversation correspond with their superior station? They should deem it beneath them to employ the conversation on trifling subjects, or in such a way that, if it were secretly taken in short hand, they would blush to hear it repeated. Sirs, it becomes a gentleman to entertain his company with the finest thoughts on the finest themes; and certainly there cannot be a subject so worthy of a gentleman as this: What good is there to be done in the world? Were this noble subject more frequently started in the conversation of gentlemen, incredible good might be achieved.

I will conclude by saying, you must accept of any public service of which you are capable, when you are called to it. Honest *Jeans* has this pungent passage: "The world applauds the prudent retirement of those who bury their parts and gifts in an obscure privacy, though they have a fair call, both from God and man, to public engagements; but the terrible censure of

these men by Jesus Christ at the last day, will prove them to have been the most arrant fools that ever lived on the face of the earth." The fault of not employing our talent for the public good, is justly styled "A great sacrilege in the temple of the God of nature." It was a sad age of which Tacitus said, "Indolent retirement was wisdom."

PROPOSALS TO LAWYERS.

Your opportunities to do good are such, that proposals of what you are able to do, may be expected to have with you an obliging reception.

But although the profession in general must not be blamed for the faults of a few, yet many will allow the justness of the following remark, which occurs in a late publication: "A lawyer who is a knave, deserves death more than the man that robs on the highway; for he profanes the sanctuary of the distressed, and betrays the liberties of the people." To avoid such a censure, a lawyer must shun all those indirect ways of "making haste to be rich," in which a man cannot be innocent: such ways as provoked the father of Sir Matthew Hale to abandon the practice of the law, on account of the extreme difficulty of preserving a good conscience in it. Sir, be prevailed upon constantly to keep *a court of chancery* in your own breast; and scorn and fear to do any thing but that which your conscience will pronounce consistent with, and conducing to "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will toward men." The very nature of your profession leads you to meditate on "a judgment to come." O that you would so realize and antedate that judgment, as to do nothing but what you verily believe will be approved in it!

This piety must operate, very particularly, in the pleading of causes. You will abhor, sir, to appear in an iniquitous cause. If you discover that your client has an unjust cause, you will faithfully advise him of it. The question is, "Whether it be lawful to use falsehood and deceit in contending with an adversary?" It is to be hoped that you have determined this question like an honest man. You will be sincerely desirous that truth and justice should take place. You will speak nothing which shall be to the prejudice of either. You will detest the use of all unfair arts to confound evidences, to brow-beat witnesses, or to suppress what may give light in the case. You have nothing to object to that old rule of pleading a cause: "When the guilt of the party is clearly proved, the counsel ought to withdraw his support." It is related of Schusterus, a famous lawyer and counsellor, who died at Heidelberg in the year 1672, that "when at the point of death, he could say, 'I never, in the whole course of my practice, gave an opinion of which I now repent.'" A lawyer, who can leave the world with such language as this, proves a greater blessing to the world than can be expressed.

It is an old complaint, "that a good lawyer is seldom a good neighbor." You know how to confute it, gentlemen, by making your skill in the law a blessing to the neighborhood. It was affirmed as long ago as in the time of Sallust, "Towns were happy formerly, when there were no lawyers; and they will be so again, when the race is extinct;" but you may, if you please, be a vast accession to the happiness of the places where you reside.

In the life of Mr. John Cotton, the author relates the following concerning his father, who was a lawyer:

“That worthy man was very remarkable in two most admirable practices. One was, that when any one of his neighbors, wishing to sue another, applied to him for advice, it was his custom, in the most persuasive and affectionate manner imaginable, to attempt a reconciliation between both parties ; preferring the consolation of being a peace-maker, to all the fees which he might have obtained by blowing up the differences. Another was, he was accustomed, every night, to examine himself, with reflections on the transactions of the past day ; and if he found that he had neither done good to others, nor got good to his own soul, he was as much grieved as Titus was when he complained in the evening, “My friends, I have lost a day !”

What a noble thing would it be for you to find out oppressed widows and orphans, and, as such are objects in whose oppression “might overcomes right,” generously plead their cause ! “Deliver the poor and needy, and rid them out of the hand of the wicked.” It will be a glorious and a godlike action.

Affluent persons, about to make their wills, may frequently ask your advice. You may embrace the opportunity of advising them to such liberality in behalf of pious purposes, as may greatly advance the kingdom of God in the world ; and when you have opportunity, by law, to rescue “the things that are God’s” from the sacrilegious hands that would “rob God,” it may be hoped that you will do it with all possible generosity and alacrity. O excellent imitation of our glorious Advocate in the heavens !

Your learning often qualifies you to “write excellent things,” not only in your own profession, but also on many other entertaining and edifying themes. The books which have been written by learned lawyers

would, in number, almost equal an *Alexandrian library*. What valuable works have been produced by a *Grotius*, a *Hale*, a *Selden*! Gentlemen, you may plead the cause of religion, and of the reformation, by your well directed pens; and perform innumerable services to the public. There is one at this day, who, in his "History of the Apostles' Creed," has obliged us to say, "he has offered like a KING to the temple of the King of heaven." May the Lord his God accept him!

Should you be called, sir, to the administration of justice, in the quality of a JUDGE, you will prescribe to yourself rules like those which the renowned Lord Chief Justice HALE so religiously observed as to become a bright example for all who occupy the seat of judicature. The sum of those rules is as follows:

"That justice be administered uprightly, deliberately, resolutely.

"That I rest not on my own understanding, but implore the direction of God.

"That in the execution of justice, I carefully lay aside my own passions, and not give way to them, however provoked.

"That I be wholly intent on the business I am about.

"That I suffer not myself to be prepossessed with any judgment at all, till all the business, and both parties are heard."

In the pursuance of such methods to do good, to serve the cause of righteousness, and introduce the promised age, in which "the people shall all be righteous," the least of those glorious recompenses you may expect, will be the establishment of your profession in such a reputation, that the most prejudiced person in the world, when seeking to find blemishes in it, will be obliged to bring in an *ignoramus*.

CONCLUSION.

While pursuing such a course of actions as has been described above; actions, which are far more glorious than all the achievements of which those bloody plunderers, whom we call conquerors, have made a wretched ostentation; still humility must crown the whole. Without this they are all nothing; nothing, without a sense that you are nothing, and a willingness to be so esteemed. You must first most humbly acknowledge to the great God, "that after you have done all, you are unprofitable servants;" that you have done only that "which was your duty to do," and also, that "you have fallen exceeding short of your duty." If God should abase you with very dark dispensations of his providence, after all your indefatigable and disinterested "essays" to glorify him, humble yourselves before him; yet abate nothing of your exertions. Persevere, saying, My God will humble me, yet will I glorify him. Lord, thou art righteous. Still will I do all I can to promote thy glorious kingdom. This act of humiliation is indeed comparatively easy. There is one to be demanded of you of much greater difficulty; that is, that you humbly submit to all the discredit which God may appoint for you among men.

I happened once to be present in the room where a dying man could not leave the world until he had lamented to a minister, whom he had sent for on this account, the unjust calumnies and injuries which he had often cast upon him. The minister asked the poor penitent what was the occasion of his abusive conduct, whether he had been imposed upon by any false reports. The man made this horrible answer: "No, sir,

it was merely this; I thought you were a good man, and that you did much good in the world, and therefore I hated you. Is it possible, is it possible," said the poor sinner, "for such a wretch to find pardon?" Truly, though other causes may be assigned for the spite and rage of wicked men against a person of active benevolence, yet I shall not be deceived if I fear that a secret antipathy to the kingdom of God lies at the bottom of it. Or, in proud men, it may frequently be pale envy, enraged that other men are more useful in the world than they, and vexing themselves with more than *Sicilian* torments, at the sight of what God and man unite to perform.

But "think not strange of the trial," if men "speak evil of you." God may wisely and in much faithfulness permit these things, "to hide pride from you." "O how much of that deadly poison, pride, still remains within us; for which nothing short of poison is an antidote!" Alas! while we still carry about us the grave-clothes of pride, these rough hands are the best that can be employed to pull them off. If you should meet with such things, you must bear them with much meekness, much silence, great self-abasement, and a disposition to forgive the worst of all your persecutors. "Being defamed, you must entreat." Be well pleased if you can redeem any opportunities to do good. Be ready to do good even to those from whom you suffer evil. In short, be insensible of any merit in your performances. Lie in the dust, and be willing that both God and man should lay you there. Endeavor to reconcile your mind to indignities. Entertain them with all the calmness and temper imaginable. Be content that *three hundred in Sparta* should be preferred before you. When envious men can fix upon you no other

blemish, they will say of you, as they said of Cyprian, that you are a proud man, because you do not jog on in their heavy road of slothfulness. Bear this also, with a still more profound humility. It is the last effort usually made by the dying "pride of life," to bear the charge of pride with patience.

Ye useful men, your acceptance with your Savior, and with God through him, and your recompense in the world to come, are to carry you cheerfully through all your "essays" at usefulness. To be "reprobate for every good work," is a character from which it will be the wisdom of all men to fly, with the greatest dread imaginable. And to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord," is the truest and highest wisdom. It is the "wisdom which is from above, full of mercy and good fruits." The sluggards who do no good in the world, are "wise in their own conceit;" but the men who are diligent in doing good, can give such a reason for what they do, as proves them to be *really wise*. Men "leave off to be wise," when they leave off to "do good." The wisdom of it appears in this: it is the best way of spending our time; that time is well spent which is employed in doing good. It is also a sure and pleasant way effectually to bespeak the blessings of God on ourselves. Who so likely to *find blessings* as the men that *are blessings*? It has been said, "He who lives well, always prays." And I will add, "He who acts well, prays well." Every action we perform for the kingdom of God, is, in effect, a prayer for the blessing of God. While we are at work for God, certainly he will be at work for us and ours. He will do for us far more than we have done for him—"more than we can ask or think." There is a voice in every good action; it is this: "O do good unto those

that are good." Yea, and there may be this more particular effect of what we do; while we employ our invention for the interests of God, it is very probable that we shall sharpen it for our own. We shall become the more wise for ourselves, because we have been "wise to do good." And of the man who is compared to a "tree that brings forth fruit," we read, "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Nor can a man take a readier way to "live joyfully all the days of the life of his vanity, which God hath given him under the sun;" for, in this case, our life will not be thrown away in "vanity," nor shall we live "in vain." My friend, "go thy way," and be joyful, "for God accepteth thy works." Our "few and evil" days are rendered much less so, by our doing good in every one of them, as it rolls over our heads; yea, the Holy Spirit of God, who is the quickener of those who "do good without ceasing," will also be their comforter. Every day in which we are active for the kingdom of God, will be in some measure a day of Pentecost to us; a day of the Holy Spirit's coming upon us. The "consolations of God" will not be "small" with the man who is full of contrivances for God, and for his kingdom. Indeed, the pleasure that is experienced in the performance of good actions is inexpressible, is unparalleled, is angelical; it is a most refined pleasure, more to be envied than any sensual gratification. Pleasure was long since defined, "the result of some excellent action." This pleasure is a sort of *holy luxury*. Most pitiable are they who will continue strangers to it!

When the useful man comes to his hour of departure, then he, who lived beloved, shall die lamented. It shall be witnessed and remembered of him, "that he was

one who did good in Israel"—an epitaph, the glory of which is far beyond that of the most stately pyramid. Then the calumniators, who once endeavored to destroy his reputation, shall have nothing to reflect upon but the impotence of their own defeated malice.

But what shall be done for this good man in the heavenly world? His part and his work in the city of God, are at present incomprehensible to us; but the "kindness" which his God will show to him in the "strong city," will be truly "marvellous." Austin, writing on this subject, exclaimed, "How great will be the felicity of that city, where no evil will be seen, no good concealed!" The attempts which the Christian has made to fill this world with "righteous things," are so many tokens for good to him, that he shall have a portion in that world wherein shall dwell nothing but "righteousness." He will be introduced into that world, with a sentence from the mouth of the glorious Jesus, which will be worth ten thousand worlds:—"Well done, good and faithful servant!" And O what shall be done for him! He has done what he could for the honor of the King of heaven; and every thing shall be done for him, that can be done for one whom the King of heaven "delighteth to honor."

I will give you the whole summed up in one word: "Mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good." Ye children of God, there is a character of "mercy and truth" in all the good that you devise. You devise how to deal mercifully and truly with every one, and to induce every one to do so too. And the mercy and truth of God, which are for ever engaged on your behalf, will suffer you in this life to "lack no good thing," and will hereafter do you good beyond what the heart of man can conceive. A faithful God has promised it—"the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

I remember what Calvin said when the order for his banishment from ungrateful Geneva was brought to him: "Most assuredly, if I had merely served man, this would have been a poor recompense; but it is my happiness that I have served Him who never fails to reward his servants to the full extent of his promise."

I will conclude with a declaration which I will boldly maintain: it is this: Were a man able to write in seven languages; could he daily converse with the sweets of all the liberal sciences to which the most accomplished men make pretensions; were he to entertain himself with all ancient and modern history; and could he feast continually on the curiosities which the different branches of learning may discover to him:— all this would not afford the ravishing satisfaction which he might find in relieving the distresses of a poor, miserable neighbor; nor would it bear any comparison with the heartfelt delight which he might obtain by doing an extensive service to the kingdom of our Savior in the world, or by exerting his efforts to redress the miseries under which mankind is generally languishing.

THE END.





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